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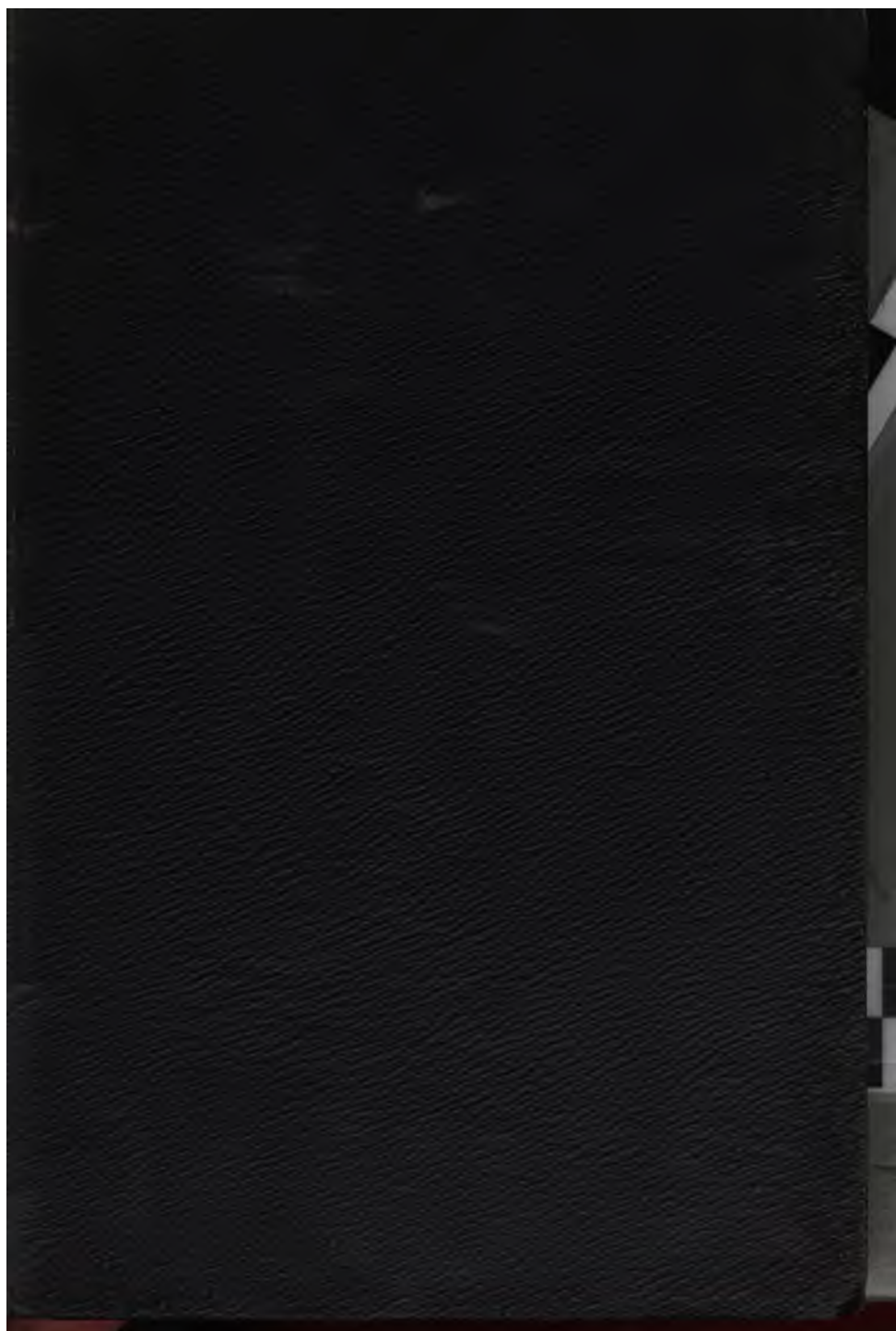
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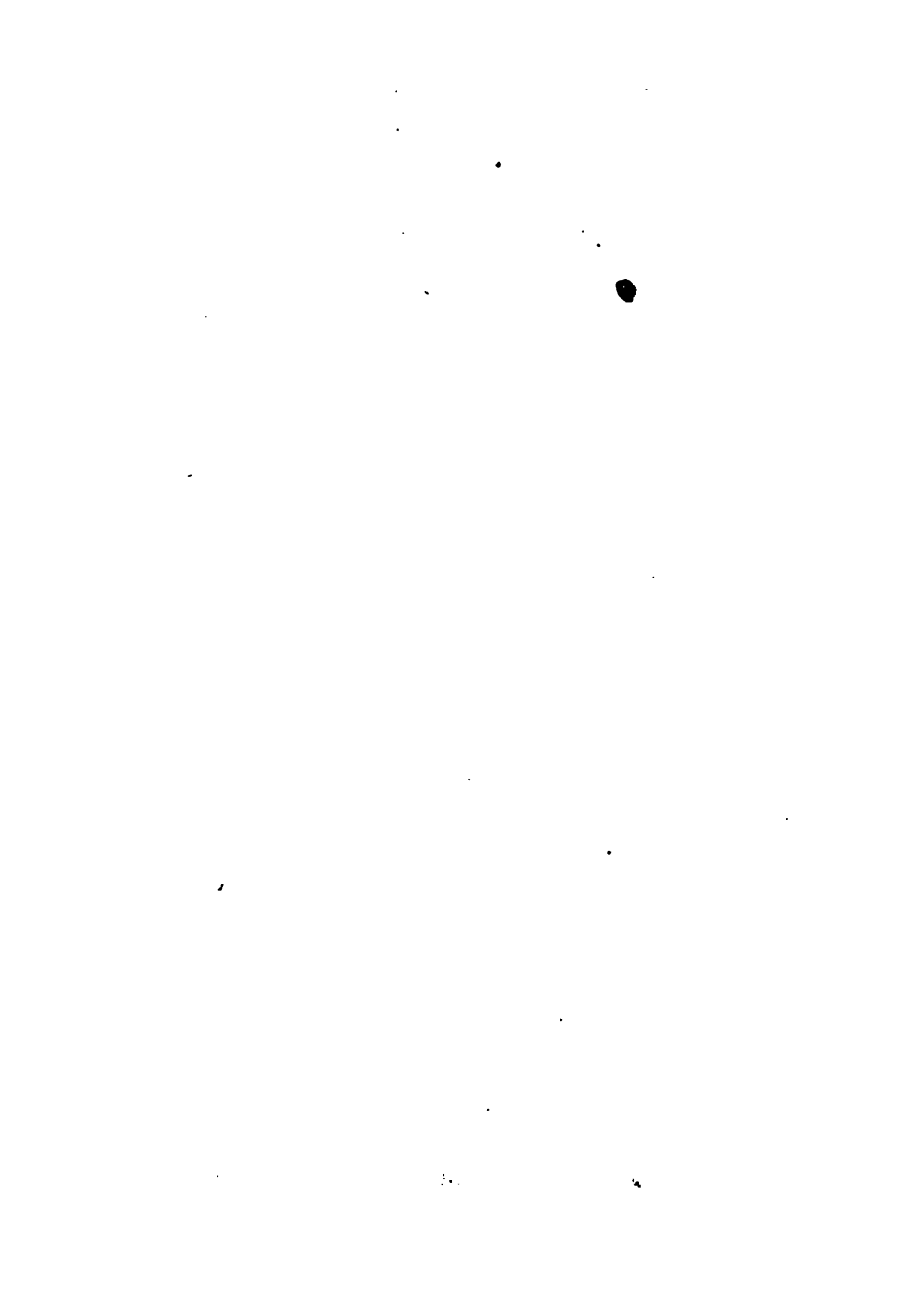
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Charles Ballantyne
YARROW



LEGENDS

OF THE

LIBRARY AT LILIES,

BY THE

LORD AND LADY THERE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE COSTLYE DAGUE—THE LADYES COUNSELLOURE.

(A LEGENDE OF THE MONASTERVE OF LYLIS.)

The Monastery of Lylis, or Lilies, aforementioned, was situate in a hamlet of the parish of Hardyng-wyche, or Hardwyke, and is about two miles distant from the still conspicuous spot where once stood the stately Castle of Bolbec. Cresselai, or Creslow, forms part of the gentle ridge which bounds the vale of Aylesbury to the north-east. Over the low country, behind the hills of Waddesden and Ashendon, to the west, lay stretched the forest of Bernewode. The ancient name of Aylesbury was Eaglesburgh, of which Saint Eadberga was the Patron Saint.

“**BESHREWE** the page! he is not worthye of a mayden’s thought, muche lesse doth he deserve a teare frō eyes such as mistres Agatha’s,” sayd one of the Ladye Amabell’s gentyl-women to a ryght fayre and young damosel, the whych was essaying, but vaynlye, to hyde the payn

she felt the whyle, and who answered not. "Nowe," continued this servyng-woman, "were I a ladye of gentle bloud, and of kin to a damoselle of hautour and estate, rather would I kyll myselfe outryght than endure that soe meane a knave sholde cause me to shed a teare."

"And who reported to you, thenne, that I did think on Isidore?" enquired the young Agatha, as slowlye she raysed her blushyng face, which shewed in fayre dymples, despight the droppes she brushed awaie. She strooked back her haire, bryght and yelow as the sunne, and newlye clereinge her loke and voyce — "Who tould you," quod she, "that I did thinke on Isidore? And as for weepyng thus for bym, I can certifye ye" and then anoder passion of gushyng teares did certifye the other mayden in her fyrst conclusyon.

"Mistres Agatha," sayd she, "it greves me sorelye, but trust me, madame, that boye wyl work you wo!"

"Of a truth and he wyl worke us all muche

wo, as I beleeve," sayd Agatha, sobbynge loude; nor did that ladye further denye herselfe the poore solace to speke her greefe, or to show forth the trew reson of her teares. "Of a truth and he wyl kyll us alle! Nowe oute upon it! my babye syster, Blanchyflore, she waxeth pale, and each nyght prateth of hym in her slepe; and my cosin's gyrle, Sybilla — naye, she doth poblyshe openlye her love toward hym; — then Elinore, and Ursula, and you, too, Prudens . . ."

"I! madame? I! mistres Agatha?"

"Nowe be not angered at honeste truth, good Prude;" and the damoyssel toke her by the hande. "We are alle alyke, good wench, and well you know the same. But noe one of us al hath nede to show jelousye of oder; for to none showeth he annye favour, God wot! He seemeth blynde that there be maydens in the castel. Nowe thynketh he onelye of his promyse to my ded kinsman given, and, tyl my

ladye cosin shall be wedd, wyl Isidore not leue her side, nor loke on woman to love."

"Trewlye my ded lorde mought haue found a more fyttinge Governar for hys sole daughter," retourned Prudens. "And praye you, madame, is the Ladye Amabell lyke to discouer her owne counsayle in the ende, and take her a husbände frō oute her manye sutors?"

"Howe shoulde I resolve you, wench?" retourned the ladye. "My cosin asketh not counsayle of mee. Rather shoulde you demaunde thys of Sybill; they are ever togeder, and needes must Sybill kno' my cosin's mynde."

"Three long yeres to-morrowe shal it be since her fader's deth," quod Prudens; "and the Ladye Amabelle is now fulle xviii yere and more; and seasonable were it she shoulde wed, and set her young page free. Thenn colde he, too, make choyce in hys own behoofe; and surelye woulde I wager he wolde loke ryght hyghlye too. Peradventure he woulde not blench to playe the sutor to mistres Agatha!"

“ And muche does it misgyve me that the mousinge hawke wolde flie at a quarrie of hys owne degree, and swoop at thee, Prudens ! ” retorned Agatha, not wythout a syghe. “ But hyste ! for even now he cometh.”

And come he did indede. “ The Ladye Amabelle,” quod the page, bowinge lowlye as he delivered hymself, “ the Lady Amabelle craues companye of her fayre cosin ; ” and soe he passed ryght on, wyth gravitye, whych showed proper dutye, yet wyth the haste of one bent upon further busines.

“ Fayre ! sayd he not fayre cosin ? ” demaunded, wyth blushes not a fewe, the damosel. “ Speke, gentyl Prude ; for, of a suretye, hys worde was herde of thee.”

“ I cannot wel reherse the worde of eache rude page who doeth servyce in the castel,” retorned the testye wench ; “ but were it soe, it were a worde of divinacyon sure, for, on my troth, he raysed not hys eye to ye, ladye, and”

“ Nowe, oute upon thee, Prude ! thys is but jelousye — foule jelousye;” and awaye she raune, moste sweetelye smyling, to answer the call of her kinswoman, the Ladye Amabelle.

Nowe were it not amysse to unryddle part of the discourse betwene these twain ; not that it were mervayle that one comlye page shoulde be endowed wyth potencie to draw wyth hym the kyndlye lokes, and lovinge thoughts of al the maydens of a castle, such as thys of Bolbec was in whych we are suposed to be, and where there was great store of that swete sorte ; but that the page aforesayd hath byn set forth by the young waiting-gentylwoman as the aþoynted governar of a welthye ladye of lignage and hautour. In good sooth, a soure word in the discourse of a crossed and sycklye-fancied serving-gyrle, may not be helde in all thyngs as trew. Thys page was not the ladyes governor ; yett was he wythal somthyng more to her than an ordinarye page. He was her page of state ; hys dutye called hym often to her pre-

sence; and bound hymself had he, and not wythoute an oathe, in noe sorte to quit hym of her servyce, tyl she shoulde take in maryage, wyth leue of holye church, a servitor more befyttinge her hygh condicyon and estate.

It was thys mayden's happ to live in those rude tymes, when myght was often styled the right; when rapin and theft were al too coñune; and when eache man muste defende hys owne wyth rysque, sometymes wyth losse of lyfe and lymbe: laws were yet yonge, and each man did supplie theyr grene impotencye by being hys own law-giver and auenger. Smal wonder was it thenn that justyce was mostlye ministered amysse! The penaltye for trespase was left to the slo worke of conscience, nor did amende for wicked dede take place at al; or onelye in some rare aduentures, when ghostlye admonicyon did enjoyne soche acte, to ease the partinge soule of its depe load of foule and secret sinne. A puissaunt baron had byn thys ladyes syre. Lyke oder of that kinde, he

counted sundrie frends; but had noe lack of foes. A knyght, warlyke and feerse, by name Syr Baldwyn de Cresselai, was hys most bitter fo: he alsoe was hys noe distant neybour, and not the less hys foe by reson of that chaunce. The twain did live in broil; but truth to saye, the knyght he ever did begin the feud — alwaie was the agressor. 'Twas war he much affected; and soe he hated peace, and, in those short, but blessed sesons, when lovelye peace wolde fayn haue sheathed hys sword, he ever did contrive to quarrel wyth hys neybour.

The baron was a mylde and gentle wight as one might fynde in those ungentle tymes. Three thyngs he loved ryght wel — peace, the stylnes of hys owne olde castel of Bolbec, and his fayre young daughter. Styl wolde he never bend to waive hys right, real or but suposed. He never did begin a stryfe; but, sett upon by oder, was none more redly or more constant to fyght for and to kepe hys owne. Nowe did he conceive hys yonge daughter was hys owne; and, in thys conceyt, it

was a fearefull thinge to witnes hys discomfort, when that the knyght did sodaynlie declare (and in wordes as iff he were the mayster), that thys fayre damoselle, the baron's onelye chylde and heyre, shoulde be straitwaye 'fy-aunced to hys sonne. The Ladye Amabel was thenn but xiv yere of age: the knyght hys sonne was xl at the least. In disposicyon he did imitate hys fader, or rather he did surpassse hym, for he was more restlesse styl, and euen more yesty-mynded; and, for hys bearinge, and hys outward favore, Nature had trewlye byn a step-dame to hym, and had sent hym bandie-legged to hys countrey's warrs. Hys countrey's warrs retorned the gyfte wyth usurye, soe scarred he was, and soe roughly entreated. The baron he did not waste love upon hys neybour; but, for hys neybour's sonne, he loathed hym outeryght. He spent but lytell tyme, and styl lesse courteseye, in hys quyk denyall to graunt hys daughter to them he soe wel knew to be hys foes.

When that the mesengers, who brot' the unwelcom tender, were dismyssed, the baron called hys daughter to hys syde. "Sweet-harte," he cryed, "wilt be Syr Bryaunt's bryde?" The symple chylde clong to her fader's brest, the whyle she gave a longe loude crye of feare. The baron smyled in self-aprouement, and straitwaye comforted the mayd. "Oute on thee, wench," he said; "thy fader did but jeste!" One persones jeste maye be anoder's poison. The mayd colde not forgett the feare she had endured; nor coude she ever after heare Syr Bryaunt hys name, but, by the same token, she did shudder wyth alarum.

And nowe the boundarye of that segnuerye was muche disturbed by lawlesse and predatorye menne, and baron as wel as knyght went forth in its defence.

The weepynge Amabelle, attended by her mayds, did folowe her deare syre to the outemoste castle gate. 'Twas euen at the barbacan — naye, at the cullis was it — that,

bydding hys warlyke train passe on, he paused to gaze once more upon hys chylde. — Dividyng the darke curles that felle in swete disorder on her face, he printed a longe and partyng kisse upon her polyshed brow. — He coulde not speke, by reson of hys harte — it was soe fulle and bigge. — Isidore, hys page, was treddyng in hys stepps, but doffed hys boñet, as he passed the ladye. — The fonde and carefull daughter caught hym by the wryst: “Isidore,” she sayd, “leve not my fader’s syde;—guard hys deare lyfe wyth thys.” From oute the foldynges of her ample robe she drew a litell dague*, whose poñelle, alle of gould, was rychlye sett wyth gemms. “Take it,” quod she, “good Isidore, and . . . bethynk thee of thy promyse.” The boye knelt at her foote, as he did take the dague, in attitude befyttinge a page of courtlye breedynge. He toke the smal but costlye wepon,

* Dagger.

and placed it in hys bosome, — but not a worde did passe hys lippes; and what the ladye was plesed to saye, touchinge his promesse given, was surelye the offspringinge of her own deepe care. — For — but that a loke can promyse (whych we know it cañot) the pages mynde was free frō dutye undertaken.

Farre oder was the partynge of the knyght — noe cheryshed band did hould hys harte to home, nor loked he o'er hys shouldre as he went. He and hys sonne dyd sallye forthe to battayle, whych they loved. But anger bent Syr Baldwyn's cloudye brow, whyle hate did rankle in hys harte. He hyed hym forth to publick battayl; but, he coulde not smother hys black and private malyce; and he watched a fyttinge seson to glutt hys furye wyth a deepe revenge. Suche seson al too sune arrived. The baron was encompassed by the aduerse partye, when disjoyned from hys followers on the edge of a darke and trecherous wode. Wyth wyley haste thenn came the knyght,

on pretence of the rescu. The daie was closyng fast. The mystes of nyght wolde surelye hyde the dede. Anoder moment — and hys wepon's poynt woulde deepe haue dronk the baron's best hartes blood! — But the murderour's arme ryght soon was in arreste, it felle alle powerlesse by hys syde. A mortall wound was in the knyght hys chest — delt by a stryplinge's hande. The baron's page, euen young Isidore, had closelye marked hys lorde. The vigilaunt eye of faythfulle loue had spyed hys daunger, and he thus had saued hys honoured maister's lyfe. The baron's folowers soone came up. But he had gotten soe manye hurtes they made hym faynt and worthlesse, and glad was he to leaue the felde, for the good shelter of hys own castel. It was neuer bruted howe the knyght he felle; and 'twas suposed he mette hys fate in honourable fashyon.

From thys tyme, Isidore, the faythfulle page, was neuer frō hys mayster's syde. Softe teares

of loue, ryght dutyefull, did flow in stremes al downe the dympled chekes of the young Amabelle, when that her syre entrosted to her keepynge the straunge adventure. — “ Restore me nowe the dague, good Isidore,” cryed she; “ surelye hath it saved my father’s life, — hensforward shoulde hys daughter hould it her dearest tresure.”

The page did strait obaye, with ceremonye meete, soche as he did use when he receved it; he restored it to the fayre handes of its mystres. But, ere he did resign the lytell costlie wepon, hys lippes did touch its poynt. Forgettfulle of her dignitie, but trew in al thyngs to her duteous love, the ladye quyklye toke the dague, and she, too, in lyke maner, kissed its dudgeon. Thenn, wyth a crymsone blushynge alle bespredd, she cast herselfe wyth sodayn action into her fader’s arms, and hyd her fayre face in hys bosome. That same nyght the litell sworde did hang suspended in the tester of the mayden’s bedd, — together wyth

an image of our blessed Ladye, and anoder of the Virgen Martyr Eadburga — her owne patrone saynte.

And nowe the fame of thys young mayden's mervaylous beautye was noysed both farre and wyde, and diuers sutors came to seeke the baron's leue to woo; and some there were (howbeit straunge it soundeth it is noe lesse trewe) who did not staye to craue such lycence; — but these did onelye marr theyr owne too hastye counsayl; for was there euer mayden to be founde, who woulde endure suche graue disloyaltye to her, as wel as to her syre? Hys reddy answer did contentment gyve to none — “He coulde not part soe erlye with hys chylde.”

But, alack! the baron had sune to byde a longer and more dolorous leue-takyng — and not onelye had he to part wyth hys deare chylde, but alsoe wyth his fayre castel of Bolbec — hys grene-wodes wyde — the porcyon of that floryshinge greene vale of Eaglesburgh,

that was hys owne, betweene hym and the
distaunt hyls, — euen al that appertayned to
hym in thys lowe worlde ! He had scaped
the daungers of the battayl, and styl greater
scathe from the depe malyce of hys fo. But
we haue an auncient song whych treateth of
manye morall themes — and whych in one
parte sayth,

“ O ! is it when bloudye warre doth rage

“ That moste thou fearest ?

“ Thynke ye when speares wyth speares engage

“ That deth is nearest

“ Syre of thy youth ? Sonne of thyne age ?

“ Or hym — hym that is dearest ?

“ At daunger knowne, wyth mynde prepared,

“ He'l not be daunted,

“ But when hys sporte on the swete grene swerde

“ By fate is haunted !

“ When to gladsom ease hys harte is bared,

“ Thenn is hys deth-song chaunted !”

And verilye thys ould song sayth not amyse.
— For our greatest scathe euer lurketh where
least it is suspycioned, and it euer arriueth to

despoyle the harte's braue glee, and its chefest contentment.

And the good baron in hys deth did furnyshe forthe a morall. In the lustynesse of hys grene youth he was a ryght able wodesman, and did throw the dart or jaelot wyth peerlesse force and dexteritye. As hys puisaunce decayed, and the buxomnes of hys stoute lymbs yeelded to the styffeninge touch of cominge yeres, the dedlie sinne of vanitye seemed to encrease within hym, and he woulde styl beleue that the feeble efforts of his age woulde surpasse the myghtye prowess of hys strong youth. It is a mervayle that he had noe friend to calle hym what he was, "A vayne olde fole, recklesse of lyfe and lymbe for verye vanitye." Howbeit, it is the sadd fate of some to heare no truth, and these doe neuer doubt theyr owne deservyngs.

The baron made store of the seson of tranquillitye that nowe ensued, and bestowed muche tyme and thynkinge on hys favoured pastyme

of huntynge the wylde bore. And once too often did thys good man use the sporte. He had wyth hys owne hande delt the fyrst flesh-wound through the tough hyde of a monstrous and bloudye-minded bore. (O! that al the bores thys world doth nowe contayne were used thus, and worse!) In the grete toyl of throwinge of the javelot, the baron was unhorsed. The wicked beast, lesse hurte than angered by hys payn, dared nowe to torne hys disloyall furye 'gainst hys worshypfulle assay-launt; and hys fryghtfulle and murderous tuskes were buryed depelye in the baron's thie, before knyght, knave, or vyllian, could hym rescue frō the mortall encounter. But where was thenn hys faythfulle page?

The ladye Amabel, to pleasur and obey her syre, had for a seson folowed in that huntynge. But her gentle nature had mucche eschewed soche rude and perylous game. She had called upon the page to lacquey her retorninge to the castel. And thus had thys ryght lovyng

daughter, by lysteninge to what shoulde have been cast asyde — her owne moste weake and womanlye fancyes — wythdrawn frō hym for whose deare sake she trembled, that most sure securitye he did possess in the active youth and well-tryed loue of hys devoted menial! — Soe wyse are we vayne mortalls in the conceyts of oure owne sycklye judgements! “Isidore,” sayd that ladye, sometye after, “I blame myselfe moste cruellye, Isidore, for that I bade thee come.” The page was too courtlye to let so fayre a ladye bewayl and blame herselfe. — “Madame,” he answered, “had your cōmaund not honoured my attendaunce, I should styl have folowed, though peraduenture at a more hombel dystaunce. That wode did border upon Cresselai; was not Syr Bryaunt’s tower in view?”

The trueth, albeit hevye, muste somtyme be tould; and, trew it is, the baron dyed, — howe lothe soeuer we maye be to saye it. But thenn, hys pious almes, togeder wyth the prayers and

promyces that were putt up, alle for hys perfecte restoracyon, wearyed, or maye be bribed, kynd Heauen into grauntinge hym this sygnal mercye — that he had tyme allotted hym, not onelye to wynde up hys worldlye reckoñyng, but euen to growe fantastick in hys moode.

He did enjoyn hys fayre young daughter to gyve up the grete deleyght of huntinge the wylde bore, and not to be prevayled upon to wedd tyll III yere shoulde goe bye from that sadde daie the whych shoulde stopp hys breth. But al as carefullye did he coñmaund, when that soche periode should have elapsed, that anoder daye frō that tyme sould not passe wythoute its seeinge her mynde declared, and virgen state abandoned. When that she shoulde nede good counsayl for her soule, he bade her seeke it of the holye preiste, who woulde be euer neare, at the monasterye of Lylis (where he dwelt), or at the styl more nyghe church of Hardyng-wycke (where her fader's bones would reste), and who euen thenn

stode mynisteryng by hys bedd, despyght hys venerable yeres, and palsyed joyntes. And for the safetie of her deare lyfe and lymbe he did provyde, by levinge bothe to the especyall survellaunce of Isidore, his owne trewe folower and bodye page (soe latelye proved, and trostye founde). He caused the youth to kneel by hys bedd-hedd, wyth hande upon the Holye Boke, the whyle he swore, with solemne worde and oathe, to serue the Ladye Amabelle wyth loue and loyaltie, and not to spare hys owne hartes bloud to guard her lyfe and honour free frō scathe or soyle, for III good yeres beyond her fader's deth.

Retorne we to that passage in oure hystorye, when that the gyrle Agatha did runne to seke her kinswoman, whyle Isidore he wended on hys waie to doe that ladyes further byddyng. He stayed not where billman and archer did hould wassayl loude, nor stinted to take part in sporte or exercyse amongst the oder pages; but gayned wyth dyligence that porcyon of

the castle that was cleped, "The maydens'," and outwardlye was helde to be the moste impregnable of annye. He tyrlled at manye a lytell dore, and hyed hym up each narrowe stayr. Halfe plesed and halfe abashed, the mayds ranne alle about — nowe here — nowe there — peerynge and pryinge — eache thynkinge he was come for her sake speciallye — it was soe freshe a syght to see hym in theyr chambres. To one and alle he gaue hys mystres's coñmaundment, that they shoulde strait repayr to the grete hall of state, and wayt her plesure there.

And sune was braue assemble made wythin that auncient hall. 'Twas erst a dysmall trystinge-place ; but nowe — it seemed as iff the sunne entrapped were wythin its massyve wals, and found noe wyll nor outelette to departe, for shyninge lokes and starrye eyes did shedd soche goodlye lyght.

Upon the dais, encompassed by her gentlewomen, the Ladye Amabelle did stond, peer-

lesse in beautye — hyghe aboute them alle. And twyce that ladye made essaye to speke, and twyce her corall lippes did vaynelye part wyth soche intent. Her worde coulde finde noe utteraunce for the trobell of her mynde. In the ende, — “Isidore !” quod she, and so-daynlye the boye was at her foote, ryght lowlye bendynge on hys knee ; “Isidore,” quod she agen, (her softe whyte hand did touch hys hedd,) “my harte, whych yerneth euer for the memorye of my ded syre, doth not forgett in what sorte it is bounden to your loyalte and love, by whych hys lyfe was somtyme plucked frō dedlye peryl, and whych my fader’s wyl, on deth-bedd spoke, did strict enjoyn to watch and warder ouer myne. Fytte seson is it nowe ye sould be free frō that most wyllynge servyce — wel fulfilled ! The daye is wel nygh come, when, by my syre’s cōmaund, I make eleccyon of my wedded lorde. Nathlesse it seemeth wel, my harte shoulde fyrst be free of that great dette it oweth unto ye. — Gold —

ryche gems of pryce — maye not be guerdon meete for soche rare servyce done. I fyrst would graunt thy hartes moste deare desyre, and thenne, good Isidore, maye I more freelye seeke myne owne; Isidore, I saye!” Straightwaie the boye loked upwarde at her calle, glyntyng hys darke eye brauelye. “Isidore,” agen quod she, “beare ye trewe love to anny?”

Straunge sounds of wonderment, poorelye smodered downe, ranne thorough the companye of maydens. Manye a fayre brest rose and felle — smal fyngers myght be seene strookinge back shynyng lockes — manye a bryght eye houldinge eloquent dyscourse to telle the grevous storye of a payned harte, and “Whyste,” sayd one fayre gentylwoman; “God helpe mee!” quod anoder; “Oute on it!” sayd a third; and “Oure mystres is to blame,” thought all; and yett eache shrewdlye woulde soche questyon were resolved.

The boye styl bended at hys ladyes foote, but none mought rede hys face, by reson of

hys handes, whych couered it ryght whollye. Agen the ladye spoke, and “Isidore!” she sayd once more.

In sorte as iff the worshippe of that voyce nowe called hym back to mocyon and to dutye, thenn rose he to her byddinge. — But joyntes alle shooke, and hys fayre cheke was pale.

“Thou hast resolued me, Isidore,” sayd shee; “it is euen to my thought, —and I haue potencie and wyl to worke thee joye.”

Agen, in sorrowinge guyse, hys fayre hedd sanke upon hys brest.

“Whye, Isidore!” quod shee, “thou doest thy mystres wrong. Make observacyon of my servyng-women here. — Speke out thy choyce!”

The redd bloud alle came back into the page’s cheke —and nowe frō crowne to heel he bore hym manfullye. Eache servyng-wench had forward pressed untill they stode, a comlye rynge of gentyl formes and smyling reddye lokes, thyck and close around,—as iff the doomes of alle and eache did hang upon

the worde that stryplinge page should utter next. Even the ladye torned frō redde to lylle whyte, — soe erneste was the heede she gaue to knowe hys mynde !

“ Ladye,” quod he, “ I craue but to be free. The worlde is verye wyde ; and, when my wyllynge servyce to ye, ladye, shal be spent, I craue but lycence to departe.”

“ Good Isidore,” she sayd, “ and haue ye not eleccyon made amonge my serving-women ?”

“ Noe, ladye, noe,” quod Isidore, and wyth excedynge quycknes ; “ they alle wyl doe mee ryght.” And he did torn hym round, as iff he wolde address hymselfe to alle and eache — fearelesse of contradyccyon — where they did stond in moste indignaunt moode of mynde.

But nowe, to the noe smal mervayle of the whole assemble, the fayre gyrle Agatha, wyth a loude crye, as of a pore thyng in payn, dyd synke upon the neck of Prude, the serving-woman. The oders ranne to her forthwyth,

and vented theyr deepe spyght, and hydd theyr owne annoye, in poblyshynge the discomposure of thys fayre damoyzell; whych modestye — that jewell rare — and feelinge kynd and womanlye, should more haue made them couer and denye.

She sune retorned to sense. Lenynge alle languyshinge upon the mayden Prudens, she thenn approached her kinswoman, — whose sodayn statelynes did ill provoke avowall of lovinge wekenes. But Agatha did nothing hede, and noe one see, savyng the page; hys talle and manlye forme, his spekyng eye, the clustres of darke curles that crowned hys forehedd hyghe; the vigore of hys lustye youth, a lytell domaged, and the bryght radiaunce of hys cheke, a lytell marred, by markes of gentle gravitye, whych telle of the hartes wyllynge toyl, and are of myghtye valure in eache fonde mayden's thought. She stode besyde the page, and peered into hys face beseechinglye.

Fayre Amabelle nowe spoke. "Isidore," she sayd, "I had not loked for thys. When I did questyon you iff that your choyce had felle on annie 'mongst my mayds, I did not, of a suretye, glynt at mystres Agatha. But thenn, I saye, your answer shoulde have byn more trewe, more manfulle. — And haue ye dared to woo my cosin?"

"I have dared muche, ladye," retorned the page, "but nothyng in that sorte — and mystres Agatha wyl clere me of suche charge."

The ladye paused. She gazed upon her page wyth scrutinyzing loke; and, as she fixed hys darke eye's honest glaunce, she thought she redd in it a loue soe trewe, so powerfulle, it made her owne eye seeke the ground. Sodayn she sayd, "Must I speke for ye, Isidore? Ye haue not dared to woo my cosin; but you haue lyfted hygh your hope, and giuen your harte in secrecye..."

"Not to the Ladye Agatha," sayd Isidore: "she wyl herselfe declare it."

And wyth anoder crye — al louder than the fyrst — that mayd did caste herselfe into her cosins armes, whych nowe were sodaynlye and kyndlye opened to receue her.

“ Deare Amabelle,” she sobbed, rather than she sayd, “ I euer thought he bore me love — and Prude did soe assure mee. I dyd not ryghtlye onderstand hys song : but whye, good coz, shoulde Isidore desyre to be a lorde or knyght, but for that I’m a ladye ? and when that he did syng it to me, and syghe the whyle as hys pore harte woulde breake, and . . . ”

The Ladye Amabell did cutt her cosin’s speche fulle shorte ; and, wyth smal show of patyent seminge, “ These ryddles wearye us,” she sayd wyth pryde. — “ Isidore ! thou dost heare my cosin’s worde — solve me thys mysterye.”

“ Ladye,” sayd Isidore, wyth bearynge none dismayed, “ it passeth my pore wytt. — The Ladye Agatha wyl surelye condescend to rede her menynges.”

“Prudens!” thenn murmured the fayre gyrl, “Prudens, you doe know it alle — and, knowinge alle, now speke : you are my privye frend.”

It is impossible to saye when privye frends or counsellours came fyrst in vogue, soe long agone it is ; but, ever since that auntyent tyme, it hath byn certifyed, and on recorde putt, that fewe did ever trostye proue to friendship in its nede. Nowe Prude did not gaynsaye thys truth. She torned her to the Ladye Amabelle : “Ladye,” she sayd, “forgyve my speche. I have byn bold in my advyce to mystres Agatha, beseechyng her wyth teare and prayer to lysten to my worde — whych she wolde euer sett at nought. — Ladye, young Isidore is not fyt to be your page of state. He lacketh drollerye and myrthfulle ’haviour. Twill be a daye of pleasaunt jubilee to alle when that the castle shal be rydd of hym. But that is neider here nor there, as the olde sayinge goes. Touchyng hys lyftinge of hys thought to mystres Agatha,

tis what he never did — and soe I euer tould her. And when she colde not be prevayled upon in annye wyse, but she muste quyt her chambre in the eastern turrett, and spend nyght after nyght al in the paynted galerye, over where Isidore doth hould hys watch in the western porch benethe hys ladyes wyndowe, I ever sayd — as I saye nowe agen — he sung hys song but to beguyle hys lonelynes. I staked my honestye, and doe agen, he knew not she did lysten; and, for hys menynges that hys poesye shoulde reach her in the farre eastern turrett, — whye, hys tones, soe mornefulle and soe lowe, were fyttier for hys ladyes lullabye than annye wooinge of hys ladyes cosin.”

“ Styl wolde I know hys song,” sayd Amabelle — albeit wyth plesaunt mene, and voyce that marked her anger clene forgott. “ Good Isidore, reherse thy song.” — But she did smyle upon the boye, in sorte to show she sayd it but

in playfulle moode, and woulde forgyve iff he should disobaye.

“ My song is lettered here,” sayd Isidore, “ but ill deserues thy notyce, ladye ;” and he did halfe wythdraw frō oute hys veste, hys tables — but quyk retorned the same.

A crymsone flush did dye the ladyes cheke ; and not alone her cheke, but forehedd, throte, and louelye neck, were coloured wyth the same. Twas playn she felt some sodayn sycknes. She made a syne, and sune that hall was tenanted but by herselfe, her gentylwoman Sybill, and the page.

“ Isidore,” she sayd, “ nowe gyue thy tables to my hande.” The page obeyed. “ Thou art charye of my gyftes, good Isidore. I doe nowe perceve these tables are the same that I did gyve thee once for lerninge of my marlyon her prettye dayntie trycks, when I was but a chylde. Alack ! the dayes were short and gladsome thenn — my Fader was alyve ! — But I muste spel thy song. Naye, Isidore, look not

soe wo-begon — I'll spel it by myselfe — and may-happ not at alle. But leve thy tables for a whyle."

"Ladye, wilt hunt the deere to-daye?" sayd Isidore. "Thy hounds and huntyng-menne alle reddy wayt."

"The daye is too farre spent," replied the Ladye Amabelle; "the shaddowes soone wyl grow soe longe we shal not marke the swyft deere rackyng thorough the grene-wode."

"Tis fyttyng hour for fyshinge thenn," Sybill nowe spoke. "Ladye, the speckled trouts and golden bream doe lye in idelnesse, or lepe and gambol in the streame."

"I wyl not spoyle theyr sporte, pore foles!" sayd Amabelle. — "I am wearye, Sybill; I wyl to my bower and slepe a whyle; and I wyl call thee, Sybill, when I waken."

The ladye moved to quyt the hall, but stayd her at the dore. "Sybill," she sayd, "prepare my bower — I'le folowe strait. Isidore, one worde I hadd forgott — touchyng my caste

of hawkes newlye arrived frō Normandye. I lyke my olde byrdes best — I gyve thee that newe caste, good Isidore. Henceforward use them as thyne owne; and let me see thee wyth the goodlye sacret * on thy wryst. Dost mark me, Isidore?”

“Ladye, I doe,” he sayd; “but, trost me, madame, I may best deserve your favour by opposyng it. I am al too lowlye for soche hyghe distynctyon; that gallant sacret is fyttyng for the wryst of knyght, to telle hys gentylnes — the hombel nesterel muste content thy servitor.”

“To-morrowe thou wylt be free,” sayd Amabelle; “and who shal dare gaynsaye my wyl to honour thee, good Isidore? — such is my bounden dutye, and my plesure too. Staye; there was oder matter I did thynke to men-

* The sacre, or sacret, was the hawk appointed for a knight. The lady's hawk was called “the marlyon;” while the knave, or serving-man, was only permitted to keep a baser sort of bird, held in small estimation, and called “the nesterel.”

cyon. I did note a worde of thyne erewhyle. Thou didst glynt at having ‘dared too muche,’ or somethyng in that sorte — had thy wordes meneinge annie?”

“They were wylde wordes,” sayd Isidore, “and lacked discretion. Forgett them, ladye.”

“That passeth mee,” returned fayre Amabelle; “thou must unryddle them. What did they touch?”

“Alack! nothyng of earth!” replied the page, wyth burninge cheke and upraysed eye. “They did belong unto a vision of my fantasye, beautifulle as the tintyngs of the manye-coloured heavenly bow — but baseless and transitorie as that fleetyng bryghtnes; and whych, iff ever I doe uerifye, it must be in heaven — it cannot be on earth!” . . .

“Thy bower is reddye, ladye,” sayd Sybilla, as she did retorn into the hall: “gaye flowers are there, sheddyng theyr spycye swetes; and rushes grene are freshlye strawed upon the flore.”

One who doth professe hymselfe to be the teller of a hystorye, must often be content to doe that whych in annye oder caracter he would be shamed to owne to. He must unriddle thoughts, tell tales, and speke of actes done pryvilye, and not for worldlye show. What he doth poblyshe he must be fader to; for, albeit hys hystorye be trewe as virgen truth herselfe, styl as he alone doth know it soe to be, he shal be blamed or lauded even as they did deserve of whom he treateth. Soe that, to clere hymselfe, he muste good reason fynde for dedes, none of hys owne, but theyr's. He cañot therefore choose but he must be a traytour unto some. Nowe, in my free capacitye, coulde I pursue the Ladye Amabelle even to her secret chambre, and strait disclose iff that she slepyng were, — or that the curious myndednes, ordinar to woman, did leade her but to feygn her werynes to spel in pryvacye her page's poesye. But, as the one or oder is in no waie necessarye for my present busynes, I wyl be a courteous

chronicler for once, and kepe the ladyes counsayle.

But, there is noe nede to show suche gentlesse to Isidore ; and, albeit I wyl not telle iff that hys ladyes eyes did shyne upon hys tables, styl I nowe declare a part of that smal sense was writt therein.

It is a mervayle that oure youth shoulde ever be soe prone to guild those fancyes most whych doe chefest mark the unrype seson of theyr understandyngs. We doe hould to what we lavyshe tyme and paynes upon ; soe that the sampler of theyr industrye is alsoe that of theyr myndes folye — soe ille they make theyr choyce of themes. They telle of ladyes eyes wyth adoracyon fyttynge somthyng better ; and make soche a coyle attwixt the nobel workes of God, and hethenysh conceytes of man, it is enough to rydd us of oure verye wyttes.

But, to retorne to Isidore. The song whych Agatha did overheare ranne thus : —

O the merle and the mavis syngeth faire,
And the cushat on greenwode thorne,
And the larke unseen in the deepe blue ayre,
Freshe sprung from the upland corne;
But the owlett's place is meeter than all,
And more pleasaunte farr to mee,
As shee sitts on the coign of the castle wall,
In the moon-beame cleare and free; —
O the owle, the owle, the nightlye owle,
My watch-felowe shee shal bee!

The eaglett hee loveth the bryght bryght sunn,
Hee maye upwarde boldlye flie,
To gaze unblenched on that light — whych none
Maye reach but a thyng of the skie!
Ah! lordlye birde! t'were a bootlesse dreame
To gaze or to mount with thee;
Then I'le sitt with the owle in the taper's beame
That shynes from yon casement free; —
O the owle, the owle, the nightlye owle,
My watch-fellowe shee shal bee!

Too proud to cower with the flutteryng herde,
Too sadd for their shrill blythe lays,
Not born to soar with the lordlye birde,
Mid those high and peerlesse rays,
The poore owle sitts by the castle tower,
Lonelye and patientlye,
With eyes uptorned to the lovelye bower,
Where sleepeth my ladye free; —
O the owle, the owle, the nightlye owle
My watch-felowe shee shal bee!

G.

Other songs were there, besyde thys one ; but they were alle soe dysmalle in the wordynge, and wyth dryft soe tyrsome to onderstand, we wyl not craue permissyon to reherse them.

The nyght was nowe halfe spent. The ladye had not called on Sybill. Swete slepe did seme to wrapp the castel in repose, and alle was myrkye darke, save where a lytell blynkyng lyght did fayntlye glymmer, markynge the ladyes wyndore, and cozeninge the folyshe batt, whych ever and anon would knock for entraunce wyth hys small leather wyng, breakyng the stylnes of the nyght. Noe oder noyse was herde, — a mornefulle tender syghe maye not soe be styled, comynge at tymes frō oute a brest trobelled, but iūocent, and fulle of gentlest wyshes.


As mornynge dawned a measured stepp was herde. Twas Isidore's, as he did kepe his custumed watch ; and hys had byn the syghe of whych we spoke erewhyle. Hys nyghtlye

dutye done, he hyed him frō the castel, by the postern gate, and sought the path that ledd towarde the church of Hardyng-wyche.

Even at that dimm hour the holye father was abroad. He spyed the page as he drew nyghe, and he did stynt to greete hym. "Fayre sonne," he sayd, "thou sekest me ryght erlye. The larke hath not yett sprung into the heights she loves, and the dampes of nyght doe hange in heavye droppes — bowynge the blossomes hedds to earthe. The gosamer doth hould the harebel styl in slyght captivitye, till the warm sparkle of the sunnes bryght beame shal clere her fetters, settinge her fayre hedd free to wanton in the ayre upon its slender thredd."

The youth did stond before the holye man abashed and grave. Hys brow was bente wyth care, and hys eye did fynde noe spott to reste upon.

"Father," he sayd, "I come to ease my brest — it hath a loade of care."



“ Speke oute, fayr sonne,” returned the man of God; “ thou comest oft soe laden, and levest mee ryght sune wyth penance lyght enjoyned. Woulde that the maydens of the castel did come as oft, and needed noe more chastenynges !”

“ Fader,” sayd Isidore, as wyth lowlye mien he folowed the good man wythin the church, — “ Fader, I have nede of your severitye to styl and smoder the vayne longynge of my harte. The dedly sinne of pryde hath gotten holde, stronge and faste, upon my mynde. I scorne my lowe estate ! I lothe the base condicyon of my berth ! Whye am I not of hyghe degre — of nobel lignage — of auncyent gentyl bloud ?”

The bearynge of the holye man grewe sterne. “ Sonne,” he sayd, “ whence com these bold aspyrings ? What sinnfulle folye doth urge thee to thy ruinyng ? Wouldst tempt thy fate in thy countrey’s quarels — wynnynge for thy name a short and bootelesse

glorye, the whyle thy soule myght rue its unregarded welfare?"

"Father," sayd Isidore, and hys eye sought the ground, "I take noe creditt soche as that. A sadd ungratefulle sonne am I to my deare moder-lande, — I never yett haue longed to doe her servyce."

"I mervayl what thou wouldest, bold young man!" retorned the preeste. — "Surelye redd gold, whych peryleth soe manye soules, hath not soche power over thyne, that thou shouldst covete..."

"I covett noe redde gould," quod thenn the page wyth quycknes; "redde gold nor jewell wyl not gayne the harte's deare ease! the mad soules tresured but forbydden wys!"

The sayntlye monitor did fasten thenn hys eyeballs in a stedfaste gaze upon the page; bigge droppes of swet did stonde upon hys front; and he did wel pourtraye the semblaunce of a man when strooke wyth great amaze at the sodayne solvyng of a dysmalle

truth. Hys tremblyng handes uplyfted in syne of grefe, and hys voyce nyghe choked in token of the same. “O sonne!” he sayd, “O Isidore! alack, I guess thy longynge! O my smal skyl! O my grate blyndnesse! Swete impe, beware! — beware! loke not that waie; it leadeth sure to wo — to deth! Alack, alack! the prophecye!”

“Father, what prophecye? What doe thy wordes — thy lokes importe? O saye — upon my bended knees I doe conjure thee! Saye on — saye on!” And Isidore did cast hym at the fader’s feete.

“Alack! deare sonne,” retorned the holye man, “I have noe choosynge lefte; — I *must* saye on, or see thee loste! Isidore, can’st mann thy harte to heare? O yes! there is noe nede for wordes, — that loke wyl doe. Thou wouldest be a lorde. Yes! gentyl bloud wyl speke, — it speketh even in that wysch! In al thys lande there is noe gentler bloud than that whych even now doth mount into

thy cheke, and make thy pulses bete to burstynge. — But oh ! poore boye ! rayse not thy thought. Thy bloud is gentyl ; but I have that to telle would make thee gladlye chaunge it for that of the vylest serfe who lyues upon the fyckle dole of charitye. Thou art the chylde of shame ! — O Isidore ! my good boye Isidore ! loke up — I charge thee speke ! Nowe rayse thy hedd frō earthe . . . and have I slayne thee wyth my worde ? O Isidore, speke annye wordes — I wyl forget, forgyve them, alle. Saye annye wordes, soe that they break thy sylence ! . . . Thou dost graspe my handes. Thou mocyonest me to telle thee more. I wyl — I wyl ; but I am olde, and sorelye greved for thee. Syt downe, good boye — syt downe, and reste thy pale cheke on my shouldre. I wyl not seke thyne eye — syt downe.”

“ Father ! say on — say on,” stammered the stryken boye, as he slowlye placed hymself besyde the holye man.

“ I wyl—I wyl,” retourned the preeste, wyth

wyse beleefe that soche was nowe hys best and kyndest course. “ Isidore, I sayd there is noe gentler bloud in alle thys lande than that whych runneth in thy veyns — and I sayd truth. Thy fader was a noble welthye lorde, of prowes in the daye of stryfe, but of courtlye breedyng in the tyme of peace, — when he did lette hys synnfulle nature maystre hys smal sense of vertue. Thy moder was oure owne dedd baron’s syster. She mucche lacked grace, nor sought in tyme for ghostlye counsayl; but lystened to the false tongue of thys dysloyal knyght. Her broder never knewe her shame. She wept alle secretlye over her foule stayne; and, when too late for worldlye helpe for her pore honour gone, she sought that couerynge whych holy church holdes oute to hartes depe strook wyth grefe. She woulde haue noysed her sinne, — but penance did not enioyn soe moche, leste that the iñocent sholde suffer wrong. Isidore, thy moder gaue thee and a twynn syster berth wythin a pesaunt’s cote. She

left her infaunts to my care and wyl; and thenn her laden spiritt fledd frō thys lowe worlde in penitence and wo. Thy fader sune did rue hys folye past. He did presente large sommes of monye to thys holye church. He builded thys our ladyes chapelle, where euen now we syt; and gaue moche charytabel almes. And, thenn, he torned hys back upon hys fayre domaynes, and felle, in battayl, wyth hys course halfe runne. Pryvilye I placed thee and thy syster Sybill in the castel. But bloud wyl euer telle; and the good baron loued thee frō a chyld, and chose thee oute of manye for hys page,—whyle soone hys fayre ladye daughter lavyshed moche fondnes on thy syster.”

“ Father, — the prophecye ! — saye on, saye on,” murmured the page, in accents wyld and lowe.

“ Sonne,” retorned the holye man, “ I fayn woulde keepe it from thee . . . but it may not be. The daye thy moder dyed, a crazed olde hag,

the grandame of the wench who helped her in her nede, uttered most piercyng cryes. Bedrydd for yeres, she thenn did stond upryght. Speechlesse frō infancye, she thenn did finde a tongue; and, leneynge over thy expyryng moder and her babes, she did reherse a prophesye, known as pertayninge to the castel; but neuer understode, and wel nyghe clene forgott. Marke it, Isidore ! . . .

“ Ther wyl be sinne, tis fyttē ther sholde be shame —

“ Ther wyl be love, and trewe love never came

“ The daye, bot greefe dyd sure ensue the morrowe, —

“ Foule sinne, deepe shame, warm love, and hevye
sorrowe.

“ Alacke ! the cup is fulle . . . It must o’erflo’ —

“ The sonne muste paye the amerse — poore chylde
of wo,

“ Colde deth thy bryde must be. — It wyl be soe.”

“ O Isidore ! I thought to save thee frō a
thretening fate, by houlding frō thee — frō alle,
— thy berth’s sadd mysterye. I tended thy
grene youth wyth care. I taught thee letters,
and did leade thy pliaunt mynd to muse on
Nature’s wonders. Alacke ! I fear I did but

ill, and pilotted thy fragil barke against the rock
I wolde haue plucked it from. My wish was
crossed by oure good lord and mayster, — who
layd strict dutye on thee at hys deth, what
tyme I thought to snatch thee frō the worlde,
and alle its dangerous vanitye, and bynde thee
to the servyce of oure holye church. — But,
nowe, it maye not be. The church is jelouse
of her ryghts; the world hath robbed her
of thy freshest thoughts — none other maye
content her. But, oh! poore youth, gyue
hede to, and obaye, my wordes. Thy brest
doth heaue wyth syghinge, thyne eye is teare-
fulle, and thy sadd harte is nyghe to breke. —
But, oh! call up thy manhode. These fond,
vayne, fantasyes wyl ende wyth youth, — and
youth is passynge even whyle we speke. —
Deare boye, loke not back upon the castel —
thynke not agayne upon its ladye; — but flye
— flye, good Isidore! my blessinge is upon
thee — flye frō thy hartes false hope; — and,

oh ! iff that kind Heven wyl helpe thee ! flye frō thy doome.”

“ Father,” sayd Isidore, “ my doome is fixed — I wyl abyde it. Colde Deth my bryde must bee ! ”

But we muste hasten to the castel. Alle was in preparacyon there for the expected brydall. The squyers, and menne at arms, and folowers, al reddye were to forme a goodlye trayn ; alle decked in garb of moste hyghe festival and state. Styl did noe one knowe what was theyr ladye’s thought, nor what myght falle betweene that bryght sun-rising and its sett. Noe showe was made of alle thys fayre arraye. It was the ladye’s order that al should stay wythin the castel and its inner court tyll synnale for departure toward the church ; where, she had glynted to a fewe, (and which ryght spedilye was tould to alle) a brydegroom wolde be founde.

Nor must we nowe passe by the maydens of the castel ; but, albeit at an erlye and a

busye hour, take leue to pry into theyr counsayles. For nowe the great affayre of womanlye harte and pryde was in quyck progresse, and braue and ryche attyres, and sparkinge gemms, wyth wymples that did make but slyght pretence to shadowe snowye bosomes, and hodes that had the skyl to show more beautye than they hydd; alle these, and more, were spredd, a goodlye, but moste ungodlye, spectacle, before these comlye gentylwomen. Ryght lytel did they knowe, and lesse woulde they confesse, how moche more mervaylouslye shone theyr beautye, cladd in that hombel, modest guyse, in whych they viewed the tocherie whych woulde soe sune obscure it.

It is passynge straunge that women do loue to solue a mysterye themselves, and yett wyl not beleve that menne doe share that frayltye; else woulde they in policie (iff they doe scorne a better reson) lette them guess a lytell at theyr beautye. We love and woo the sunne, when he doth peepe upon us; but, when he stareth

fulle and garyshlye, he is al too hotte, and we doe hayl a modeste sylver cloude that cometh attween us and hys feerse golden beames, makinge them more temperate and lovelye.

There is a sycknes of the mynde whych mayds calle "love." We wyl not staye to make a questyon of theyr ryght to dignifye wyth soche a soundynge name theyr poore infirmitye, the whych not only beareth noe semblaunce to that nobel generose passyon, (whych none save gentle myndes maye enter-tayne,) but is opposed in alle thynges to it. Thys straunge infirmitye doth cater for itselfe a thryftlesse hope, whereon it feedeth for a tyme, and feedeth greedilye. But soone it tyreth of soche slender cheer, and thenn 'tis fayn to starve outryght.

These maydens had nowe lost theyr folyes sustenaunce touchyng young Isidore, and oder vanities had gotten holde upon theyr lyght and sillye myndes. Moche wordes did they nowe speke (some lackynge dayntynges), and

many snatches of olde ballads did they syng (moste of smal pietye), and ryght noysye myrthe did they nowe ryot in, as they did dyzen for the brydal of the fayre Ladye Amabelle, and eache put forthe her fancye on whome that ladye's choyce shoulde falle. Moste did saye, "She shal smyle upon Syr Mamaduke at laste." Some thought on knyghts more dys-tant styl; but, albeit he had euer byn a sturdye sutor for her grace, noe one was fole enough to name Syr Bryaunt de Cresseai.

Now muste we not be understood to mene that alle the gentylwomen were of thys lyght companye, and yett muste we confesse noe more than one was myssyng, and she was Sybill, of whome it doth becom us nowe to saye a worde in passyng. We have byn tould what was her trewe estate. It maye be called to mynde that when, at oure outsettyng, the fayre gyrle Agatha did sorelye comēt on the oder mayden's 'haviours, she sayd that Sybill did not stint to "poblyshe forthe her love" for the boye Isi-

dore; and for thys once the Ladye Agatha sayd trewe. Dame Nature is a dayntyte guyde, and albeit Sybilla did not guess (because she colde not) that he was her broder, styl did the bloud and harte wythin her yearn in soche ryght godlye and gracyous guyse toward hym, that she coulde adventure to showe forth her honeste love wythouten blynke nor blushe; and thys was Nature takyng tent of her deare chylde.

But Sybill was a young and comlye mayd, and, next the Ladye Amabelle's swete selfe, the fayrest shee of alle.

Sybill was myssyng frō the counsayles of the oder gentylwomen. They thought her ladye did demaund her servyce; but they did gues amysse. The ladye was alone, in solitarie state, close hydd frō anye eye! Alle in her secret bower she satt, holdyng soft coñune wyth that busye chetynge thyng—her owne ryght folyshe harte.

But where was Sybill thenn?

It was sometyme sayd the Ladye Amabell had

sutors not a few, and that Syr Mamaduke was one. Syr Mamaduke de Bernewode he was styled. Hys landes did lye noe manye myles frō Bolbec. He was a brave young lord, wyth toures, and townes, and jewells, that were enough to dyzen xx brydes. The ladye she had knowne hym frō her chyldehode, and her syre did honore the fayre impe. 'Twas even thought of some that he did glynt at hym when he enjoyned hys daughter to tarrye yett III yere or ere she wedd; for, at that tyme, thys stryp-lynge lorde was absente at the warres.

Howbeit, he did retorne, nor faultered in hys dutye; for he did oft-tymes paye obedyence at the castle to its fayre ladye mystres. Styl coulde noe one saye shee showed hym aught of favoure; for II tymes oute of III wolde she sende Isidore to playe at bowles wyth hym, and kepe hym frō her presence. Somtymes wolde she coñmaund her servyng-woman, Sybill, to entertayne the knyght, whyle she herselfe woulde loyter ouer her frame of tapisserye, and

lyste to Isidore, hys swete and mournfulle tones, as he did poure them forthe in song be-
neathe her chambre wyndowe. She woulde
sitt, her hande lyke fayre whyte marbel, alle
soe styl, but raysed in acte to sew, holdynge the
shyninge bodkyn, the whyle its sylken thredds
alle playinge in the wynde, as iff they would
recall her fynghers to theyr dutye, her softe eye
nearelye closed, her daynty lippes apart; —
soe woulde that ladye sytt, and lysten to the
notes, soe fonde she was of musycke in her
soule !

But we doe prate apace, forgettfulle of oure
parte. At erlye tyme of daye Syr Mamaduke
did come, demaundyng earnestelye to parley
wyth the ladye.

He came nott in the style and state of young
knyghts when they woo, cladd in sylke al rayed
wyth gold, wyth folowers for manye a myle, and
trappynghes gaye, and harneys bryght, — but he
did com alone, and to the postern-gate, juste as
young Isidore, retornynge frō the church, did

enter by the same. The knyght did praye the page to crave a hearynge for hym of hys ladye; and Isidore, wyth altered mene, and mynde alle absente frō hys acte, did slowlye doe hys byddinge. Attwene the 11, the gate, thenn first for manye yeres, abyded open.

Fayre Amabelle did marke her page's seminge, wyth curious, but gentle care. "Isidore," she sayd, "thou needest reste, pore Isidore; but styl muste doe thy mystres spedye servyce. Prepare a gallant barbed steede, and hye wyth hym beneath the terace at my chambre wyndore. In one short hour I wyl be there, and telle thee where to goe."

"Isidore," she sayd agen, and thenne she paused outeryght; and it were harde to certifye the whylk did trembel moste, the ladye who myght comaund, or he who muste obaye:—"Isidore," she sayd, "my harte is fulle of busye thought; I have noe frend to counsayl mee; a hevye wayt is on my mynde, and wyl-deryng fancyes, lyke sadd prophetick warnings,

— but thou art wondrous pale ! good Isidore. Hye thee to doe my byddinge. I wyl despatch Syr Mamaduke the whyle, thenn meete thee where I sayd.”

“ ’Twyl be the laste behest ! ” sayd Isidore ;
“ ladye, the laste ! ”

“ O, naye ! ” cryed Amabell ; “ O, not the laste ! Isidore ! it *shal not* be the laste ! Canst trost to mee ? ”

And shee, wyth mervaylous swete condescencion, did holde forthe both fayre handes towards the page, nor torned her face asyde ; whyle he, in sodayn extacye, did pres them to hys harte and lippes.

Wyth smylinge mene, the ladye mocyoned hym awaye, and thenn she called on Sybill ; nor did she longer seeme to nede a frend, styl lesse good counsayle for to ease her harte ; (soe facil ’tis wyth mayds to chaunge theyr myndes and moods.)

“ Sybill,” quod shee, “ good Sybill,” (when that ourselves are pleased al the worlde seemes

good,) “ good Sybill, nowe hye thee to Syr Mamaduke; greete hym well frō mee; but telle hym strait that, oute of that olde frendshyppe whych hath growne attweene us since oure infauncye, I gyve hym warnynge fayre to take hys leve, for that my choyce is reddyed made, but falleth not on hym : yett speke hym fayre, for my ded fader’s sake, and gyve hym thanke for servyce past.”

Sybilla hyed her forth — her harte beate strong and quyck. Syr Mamaduke had won her syllye mynde wyth wordes of love, and promesse of great welth; but thenn, noe mencyon had he made of holye church nor preeste. Nowe did she fele a wyshe to trye hys love outryght. What maydens wysh to doe, is seldome longe a doinge. She toke a mantell frō her ladye’s closette, alle furred wyth minyvers, tasselled and edged wyth gold. A rydinghode of skarlette clothe did shaddowe her fayre face, and hould her yelowes lockes frō shamynge her disguyse. Alle lyke the Ladye Ama-

belle she shewed, save that som maladresse did marke small use of soche hygh gear.

Syr Mamaduke he sune espyed what he did thinke the castel's ladye, and he did runne wyth courteseye to greet her; but, long afore Sybilla colde begin her wylie game, he spake ryght lustyllye hys mynde.

"Madame," he sayd, "I craue your kyndest thoughts, wyth pardone for my faut. I cam to thys castelle to wyn its mystres fayre. I stayed to woo a hombel servyng-gyrl, on whome my soule doth dote. — Your mayden, Sybill, hath my harte in thrall. She needes muste guess my love, but doth beleve I wysh to worke her shame. 'Twas but a false pretence to trye her worthyenesse, the whych doth shyne soe bryght, it putteth oute the eyes of prudence, — and I doe crave your leve to woo her for my bryde."

The ryding-hode, lesse skarlette than the chekes it late had couered, felle frō Sybill's hedde. The ryche mantelle did slyde alle downe her shouldres, whyle her yelow lockes did doe the

dutye of them both, and made a fayrer skreene for her great lovelynes. — But we have oder matter on oure handes, and these ii lovers wyl not greve iff we doe leve them strait: we did but undertake to show where Sybill was.

Nowe, lett it not be sayd or thought that the fayre Amabelle did make a mysterye of that whych did not soe requyre, (lyke manye oder mayds, the whylck doe moche delyght them in a sadd crooked path; the whyle, iff that they wysshed, they mought goe strait, and fare the better for it.) Her father's wyl coulde not be hydd. Syr Bryaunt he hadd herde the same, and, wyth a fearfulle oath, hadd sworne, that when the tyme shoulde come for her to telle her mynde, iff (whych was nott to be thought) her choyce felle nott upon hymselfe, he wolde folowe to the deth the knyght whome she sholde name to be her wedded lorde.

Could thenne that ladye noyse her meneinge? And noe smal mervayle was itt, but oweing to her excedyng beautye, and her grete

deserte (and, possibel, her wyde domayne), that annyke knyght was fonde to ryske soche thretened scathe. But pelfe and love doe make a manye foles !

Neider was it maladvysed that Isidore did watch beneath the ladye's chambre; for feerse Syr Bryaunt hadd declared, ryght openlye, he helde it lawfuller acte to wyn, by stratageme or force, what was denyed hys servyce.

Softe sylver tones did flote upon the ayre, issuinge frō oute the ladye's chambre. Fayre Amabell did passe her slender thombes ouer her swete dulcemar, producyng soundes whych shamed the lytell byrdes, who stopt theyr throtes to take a paterne for the next houre's melodye.

And Isidore was come : hys steede did beate the ground, impacyent of the morse and reyn.

The ladye herde the trampe. She passed the narrowe wyndyng stayr which bro't her frō her tower upon the terace. She lened her fayre forme on the battelments.

“Isidore,” she sayd, “nowe lysten to my worde. Thou knowest thys lytell sworde?”

“Ladye, ryght wel!” the page retorned.

“Take it,” she sayd, “once more. It hath done servyce good to mee and myne. It saved my fader’s lyfe; but euen afore that, it served thys hous ryght wel. ’Tis sayd, in tyme longe past, when that a lorde of thys castelle did carouze longe and deepe, a boone-felow did thynke to spyl hys bloud. Thys lytell sworde did lurke in my fore-fader’s veste; and, when the wycked man did hould hym by the same, the whyle he reddyde made to stryke the dedlye blo’, thys wepon, alle of its owne accorde, did styng hys hande soe sore, he cryed wyth the smarte, and lefte hys base desygne, tyl soche tyme as my gran-syre retorned to fyttyngge plyght to meete hym hande to hande. Thys dague was thenn endowed wyth its brave hylte of gould.

“Agen, a ladye of our hous, in beautye vastlye ryche, but pore in lande and towne,

did suffer muche annoye frō a false neybour
knyght, who lefte hys owne hyghe dame, to
woo my kinswoman wyth lawlesse loue, and
spoyle her mayden fame. When putt to bytter
tryall, and noe lesse jeopardye, thys dagger
was her frend. She strook her owne fayre
syde, and dyed in iñocence ! Synce thenne,
these mylkye perles were stocke upon its
poñelle alle of gould ; and it hath byn styled,
“ The Ladye’s Counselloure ; ” and it hath
euer gone, for manye yeares, from one ladye
to oder in oure hous, and soe it moste styl
goe.

“ And uerylye, I saye, it hath to mee byn
counselloure and frend ; for, since my fader’s
deth, it onlye hath been privye to my moste
secret wordes, and it hath seemed to guyde me
to my dutye. It beareth nowe the mysterye
whych muste soe soone be tould. For on its
trostye blade it sheweth a deare name, the
whylk wyth toyle and tyme I have graven
deepe and sure, (yett in my harte that name is

deeper writt!) and sure it is, it is my husbonde's name.

"I prate, the whyle the sunne, attayninge hys fulle power, doth chyde my loyteringe. — Then haste thee, Isidore! I gyve thee nowe thys dague, whych beares my perfecte mynde. Loke nott upon its dudgeon; but take it to the church of Hardyng-wyche, and gyve it to the holye man who reddye wayts, wyth vestiture and boke, to bynde me to a spouse."

"Ladye," sayd Isidore, "farewel!"...

"O wycked worde!" cryed Amabelle; "whye speke it nowe? Myne owne good Isidore — I meete thee at the church!"

"Deare ladye — noe!" sayd Isidore; "I doe thy laste behest — I see thee not agen!"...

"Isidore," that ladye sayd, "nowe lysten to my worde — once more I doe enjoyne thee to doe my wyl — and onlye once! O hye thee to the church — the preest muste rede that name — and he muste telle it thee. Thenn take that dague agen, and wayt wythin the church to

gyve it to my hande; for I wyl folowe strait upon thy steppes wid alle my gorgeous pageantrye and state. — Dost promyce, Isidore?" . . .

"Ladye! I doe — I doe," he sayd, and torned hys gallant steede, albeit mornefullye.

The ladye smyled, as ladyes wyll, when they have moulded alle thyngs to theyr wyssh. But soone that sunnye smyle was chaunged to bytter feare, and cryes and shreikes did suṃone quyck her waytyng-women to her syde. — Alack! and black Syr Bryaunt he hadd herde the whole dyscourse!

He had founde entraunce at the open posterne gate. Alle on hys darke horse reddy mounted, he traitorouslye did hyde behynde a buttresse large. The whyle hys wicked eare did drynke the ladye's secret worde.

"I'll reade that name!" he cryed; and sodayne he did flye, rather than he rode, in close pursute of Isidore. The page did see hym come, and, bendynge to hys saddell-bowe, soe that hys slender forme sholde not oppose

the ayre to staye hys swyft career, lyke plumed arrowee frō the yew, he shott along hys course.

They soone were oute of syght, albeit that ladye did strayn her eye in vayne, and wryng her lillye handes in wofulle plyght of grefe. — “My steed ! my steed !” she cryed; “bryng even Lyghtnyng forth —” (thys was her owne fayre steede, for swyftnes farre renowned,) and mount ye, maydens myne, and folowe to the church, and calle the seneschal, and soun’ the comynge-bell, and sygnall make for haste ! O leve to shade myne hedd, nor mantell wyl I don, uncombered lette me goe, alle for the greater speede.”

Feare doth lende wyngs. The ladye sune was on her waye, afore her menn-at-armes colde issue frō the castel-court. She even lefte her mayds behind, albeit they did not fayle to urge theyr stedes alonge. For curiositye did leade eache folyshe hedd, and tenaunted the gapp whych wysdome neuer fylled.

Even at the portal of the church, a horse al pantynge laye. Hys flankes did showe the haste he had byn rydd wythall, and hys harde nostryl stroue in vayne to gather wynde. "Hys stede it is," cryed Amabelle: "my harte doth augure wel! O, Isidore, I come!"...

She entered strait the porch. Alack! bigge droppes of bloud upon the holye flore did all too playnlye marke there had byn dedlye stryfe. O, fatal augurye!—the crymsone staynes did thycken as she gayned the holye altar's foote; and there the sayntlye preeste did bende hys aged forme, and plyed some bootlesse skyl to staye the soule's impacyent flyght frō oute the dyinge page.

Faythfulle and trewe, in lyfe and deth, fayre Isidore had done hys ladye's byddinge, and alle too wel hadd kept hys promesse gyven. Even at the portal of the church, hys steed had rowled wyth over spede. Syr Bryaunt had then come up, and, alle before the preeste coulde close the holye dores upon hym, hys

darynge hande, recklesse of sacrilege, did
hould the boye in thrall.

“Where is the dague?” cryed he in scorne;
“where is the ladye’s counselloure?”

“Tis here!” — sayd Isidore, and opened
strait hys veste .

The poñelle of the lytel dague was seene.
But, for its blade, and alle its secret mysterye, —
oh ! it was hydd, and buryed deepe wythin hys
owne fayre brest ! . . . He felle upon the flore.

The man of God, wyth handes upraysed,
did stond between the twain — alle gyfted
wyth a sodayne potencye to awe the stalwart
knyght, whyle he denounced upon hys hedd
the churche’s dredde blame. Syr Bryaunt,
he strode awaye wyth sullen pace — albeit
black rage was in hys harte.

Alle pale and colde is Isidore — alle styl he
lyes — hys darke eye closed and dimm. But
lyfe, as iff it yett had worke to doe, lyngers at
hys harte; and hys pore lippes essaye to calle
on Amabelle.

Sodayne, a crymsone flushe doth passe alonge
hys cheke, makynge false sho' of vigoure com
agen; and a sadd smyle did quyver on hys
lippes. It was the crye of Amabelle that
wrought the sodayne chaunge. Hys eye did
open on her honoured forme.

“Ladye,” he fayntlye sayd, “forgyve thy
faythfulle page, and heare hys partynge worde.
Ladye! O Amabelle! I dye for thee — for
thee! I have dared to love thee at my soule.
I nowe maye speke that worde.”

“Isidore,” she cryed, “nowe save my burst-
ynge harte, and gyve mee swete assuraunce
thou wylt live to love me longe. Did'st loke
upon the dague?”

“O noe!” he softlye sayd; “I heeded wel
thy worde.”

“Alack, too wel!” the ladye cryed, whyle
she did wrynge her handes. “O Isidore! O
my deare love! Thy name is on its blade!
Ah! thou canst smyle! — thenn live — thenn
live — to be my love — my lorde! O false,

false dague! thou hast torned a rigourous
champyon for my house's honour. But I wyl
chete thee styl. Father, nowe joyne oure
handes before thys holye altar; soe shal my
syre's coñmand be surelye, albeit sadlye, done.
Swete Isidore, for thy deare sake, I'll knowe
noe oder love!"

She bent her fayre hedd on hys face; —
alack! noe warmth was there.

She touched hys forehedd wyth her lippes.
Hys spiritt was in peace.

L.

MISADVENTURES
OF
A SHORT-SIGHTED MAN.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

“ It was in ignorance, Glo’ster’s eyes being out.”
King Lear, Act iv. Scene 5.

I do believe I am the most unfortunate man alive. I am ashamed of my name, and dare not use it. I have lost my fortune, my friends, my honour, and my wife. I am reviled as a spendthrift, pointed at as a pick-purse, and shunned as a libertine; and yet I am as guiltless of waste, of theft, and of profligacy, as the babe that has never seen this wasteful, thieving, and profligate world. Neither can I justly blame others for any of my misfortunes, excepting in one instance, and that the one to

which I am the least sensible — the loss of fortune. Even that may be attributed, in part, and all the rest wholly, to my miserable luck in having been born extremely short-sighted. Unless I relate the principal adventures of my life, I cannot expect that any one should take my word for what sounds so improbable: I shall therefore write my story. It may reach the eyes or ears of some of my early friends, who may thus be induced to attend to an explanation of facts, and to do me tardy justice. It may chance to cause some slight interest or amusement to the publick. At all events, the recital will beguile a few hours of my tedious and solitary existence, and procure me, once again before I die, a feeling of my own importance, while I make myself the sad hero of the following sheets.

Reader, have I not said I am ashamed of my name? Then, do not expect me to divulge it. Thus much will I confess — it begins with a B; and, courteously allowing the confidence

between us to be limited in this single respect, suffer me to be known to you only as Mr. B. of London; for I was born and bred in London, was apprenticed to a tea-merchant in that city, went into business myself in the same place, lived and married there (only going to Islington for a very short honeymoon), and in London I probably shall die, shrouded in that obscurity in which I am now carefully hid, and where I am by this time (I almost hope) forgotten.

My father was a man well to do in the tea-trade. I was his only child; and, although he could have afforded to make a gentleman of me much better than probably he could have done had he been himself a gentleman, still his pride was not of that sort. It was to be respectable and respected in that walk of life in which his birth had cast him. He considered trade and wealth as elder and younger sisters, and would always represent them as going hand in hand; industry and content, as brothers in the same

relationship to each other, and as little caring to be divided. That all the forms of trade might be observed, my father made me serve my apprenticeship with an excellent man (likewise a topping tea-merchant), who treated me like a son, but in whose house I lived less than in my father's; for some of my mornings, most of my evenings, and all my Sundays and holydays, were spent under the paternal roof. There I never failed to criticise, as I sipped it, my mother's tea, to question her congou, and to insinuate that her souchong had not the true Pekoe flavour. This I did for the double purpose of courting my father, by showing him the insight I was gaining into his favourite trade, and stimulating my mother (who was a very saving woman) to put another pinch into the pot. Quiet, happy days! I look back to you with a painful affection.

At twenty-one, my time was out, and my father made me his journeyman. For fifteen years, I served him with fidelity; at the end of

which period, and when I was thirty-six years of age, I fell in love — not unconsciously, nor romantically, nor violently; but intentionally, considerately, and sufficiently. My father chose the lady; she was the daughter of his best friend: he thought her full young; but then he was anxious to see me settled; and, as we were to live with him and my mother, he persuaded himself that that defect might prove a blessing, as a young mind is so easily trained to habits of industry and obedience. The two fathers, and one lawyer, settled every thing before I or the young lady even guessed at their intentions; and we should have been married without any previous courtship, had not my mother desired a delay of only half a year, that the ceremony might take place on my father's seventieth birthday, in which very natural fancy we were, of course, both willing and happy to indulge her.


My wife was but just turned eighteen, and she looked even younger. There was nothing

predominant in her appearance; she was of middle stature and middle size; her features were small, and she had a pretty fair complexion; her hair was neither dark nor light. In short, she was so very like every third young woman that one passes in the parks on a fine Sunday, that I am at a loss how to describe her in any more particular manner. Would to God she had been more remarkable in her person ! or even in her voice !

As to the character of her mind, my experience in ladies is small; but I do suppose she was as much like every third young woman one meets with in the Park, in that respect also, as she was in her outward form. She was good-natured and kind-hearted, and very good-tempered, whenever she was pleased. She had her virtues, and was obedient and economical; and she was a pattern of modesty and decorum. Her fault (and who is faultless?) was obstinacy. It was but one fault, but it clouded all her virtues. Through it her obe-

dience was, if I may say it, too literal. For instance; if I requested her to do a thing, unless I were of myself pompously to issue a counter order, no accidental change of circumstances, nor probable change in my wishes, could induce her to relax in her instant execution of the original mandate. Her œconomy was of the same rigid nature. No unlooked-for arrival of an old friend, no sudden good news, either publick or private, no entreaty, could make her forego her accustomed routine of prudent and œconomical arrangements. My father had chosen her for her obedient disposition; my mother had praised her for her knowledge in the saving art; her pride was concerned; and she was determined to justify their good opinions. Nothing short of a call from me upon her obedience could relax her unaccommodating prudence; but this, by giving me so much of the trouble, took from me half the pleasure of our little festivities, whenever (and it was but seldom) such things did happen,

I have described my wife—here, then, let me insert a few particulars concerning myself. I have already said I was short-sighted, but to what a degree short-sighted it is difficult indeed to express. It was most inconvenient in my business, and distressing upon all occasions; but, oh! how peculiarly unfortunate in my domestic transactions! As a child, my nurse had to lead me longer than ever other child was led, lest I should be drowned in the gutters; to feed me longer than ever other child was fed, lest I should poke out with my spoon the scanty portion of sight I had. As a boy, at day-school, various and cruel were the tricks my school-fellows used to play me. With how many pieces of alum, carved into a clumsy imitation of white sugar-candy, have I poisoned my mouth! How often have I presented some forbidden and ungodly book to our master (who was of a serious turn), which the sly urchins had substituted for my English grammar! As a lover, the scrapes I used to get



into may be better conceived than described; they were endless. How often have I bought for my mistress some token of true love, and presented her by mistake with a sample of tea, while the symbol of my passion was inclosed and forwarded to some matronly customer as per order. As a man, and a tradesman, what I suffered from the untoward accidents that befel me, all owing to the same unfortunate cause, is hardly to be credited. I was for ever mistaking congou for souchong, young hyson for old, or both for gunpowder. But I am digressing. Let me return to my narrative. Soon enough for my reader's impatience, and too soon, alas! for my own tranquillity, I shall arrive at the sequel of the events occasioned by my unfortunate defect.

To proceed. My outward appearance (even independent of the considerable stoop inseparable from this calamity) is somewhat remarkable, inasmuch as it was always very old and formal for my years. At thirty-six, when, as

I have said, I married, I might have passed for fifty. I always wore spectacles; and a very neat, precise, formal personage did I appear one morning before the altar in Bow church, leading a bride, who was only remarkable for her look of extreme youth and simplicity.

Within a few years after my marriage, my father died, and I entered upon his business on my own account. My mother had become childish. In about a year after my father's death, she too was called away. My business employed much of my time. My wife was always too much occupied by her domestic concerns to be much of a companion; and although not a great many years married to a still young, and certainly pretty, woman, I was as complete an old bachelor in my habits as I could have been had I never taken a helpmate. My life was industrious, monotonous, innocent, and happy. I used to rise early, and attend in the shop till ten; then I would go to Leadenhall Street, or visit the ships from India, or see to

matters in my warehouses. I would step into Garraway's for a sandwich at noon, run home for a chop at dinner-time, and then return to business. When the day's work was concluded, I would accompany a friend to his house, and take a cheerful glass, and a biscuit, or he would go with me to mine for a comfortable dish of tea. Then we would play cribbage together, or, with my Wife's help and Dumbey's, make out a rubber of whist. Then followed a temperate supper, and, by half past ten or eleven, every light was out.

In such an industrious course of life, business was sure to thrive — mine increased rapidly. The concern grew too considerable for one head to manage, and I was obliged to look about for a partner. As I shall have frequent occasion to mention the defect in my sight, I will in future call it, simply and concisely, "my calamity," — it being the parent of all the others that have surrounded me through life. My calamity, then, was my chief

inducement in taking this important step ; for, in so large a concern as mine was now become, an Argus would not have had too many eyes, nor a lynx more piercing ones than were wanted to keep all things in their proper order. I had little, or rather no knowledge in the science of phrenology ; but what did that signify ? for, had I been ever so conversant with all the indications which, in choosing a partner, one ought to desiderate or avoid, how was I, with my calamity, to steal a sly look at the shape of a man's head, when it was as much as I could do, with double spectacles, to see if he had a head at all ? I have been since informed, that, had I not been blind as ignorant, and ignorant as blind, I never could have chosen a partner with such a diabolical amount of secretiveness and appropriation on his shoulders, without one redeeming protrusion, as was possessed by my most confidential agent. I found out, but too late, that he had every possible organ that he ought to have been

without, and not a single one to compensate with a tolerable counteracting propensity. This is what I was told: all I know is, that he was a very tall man; that, to me, his head was always in a mist; and that, even had I been able to make head or tail of the science, I never could have caught a sufficiently defined outline of form to apply it to any practical use. But I am becoming prolix. He was a rogue; he wormed himself into my confidence; he encouraged me to “rest my eyes,” (as he hypocritically phrased it,) and to give over books, consignments, documents, every thing, to his keeping. At the end of two years, I was no longer master in my own shop. Every thing was managed without my direction being even asked for. I was a cypher! Blind as I was, I could perceive that my clerk and my shopboys laughed at me. I demanded an explanation, and was answered with insolence. I required a dissolution of partnership—it was agreed to; but I had given up all my papers. Another had acted

for me, who had risen at my expense. He refused to account for many hundreds of pounds that I had given, in the way of business, into his power. He knew that my unfortunate blindness had once caused me to mistake one bundle of papers for another; and that thus I had burned by accident several receipts and securities which would have bound him to repay me. He took advantage of the circumstance. In short, I had nursed a serpent in my bosom, and now it was that he turned round and stung me.

I was more than half ruined. I retired from business, or, to describe it more truly, I was turned out of it by my wicked partner. But I tried to make the best of a bad job; and my wife behaved like an angel. She seemed to feel our losses much less severely than I could have expected from so thrifty a woman. Far be it from me to wish to take from any merit of her's; and yet I do believe that, her thriftiness delighting itself with small matters rather than with large, more with pence than pounds,

she was happier, and more completely in her element, as sole manager of a small house at Mile End, where her eye could be upon every out-going and in-coming, than in our large concern, where, as I have often heard her remark, in her own quiet way, she never knew what was behind her.

But I soon got tired of this, to me, idle and unprofitable way of life. I was disgusted with the world in general; and I resolved to turn every thing that remained into money, and go for some years to America, where I might carry on some little traffick, and be busy at least, while I waited for better times. My wife's father was rich; and, as she was his only child, I might reasonably expect to inherit his fortune at his death. But he was in a great way of business, and could spare us nothing at present. He was hale and hearty, and my temper would not brook watching for dead men's shoes. My losses had increased my natural reserve, and had made me suspicious, and I felt

unwilling to confide in any one. So, when I had settled every thing in my own mind, I bade my wife ask no questions, but prepare (with as little ostentation as possible) for a voyage over the seas. She, good soul ! was all obedience, as usual, and was soon ready. I took a passage secretly for her and for myself on board a ship bound for Philadelphia, which was expected to sail in a short time. This ship had already dropped down the River as far as Gravesend, and to that pleasant sea-port I went with my wife and our luggage. I put her on board, and saw every thing carefully stowed ; but having still a little business to transact in the city, and some dividends to receive at the Bank, I returned by myself to London, intending to be back long before the ship would sail.

In three days' time I had completed my final arrangements. I took, as I thought, a long leave of my native city, and went once again to Gravesend to join my wife and embark for

Philadelphia. Judge, reader! — but no; how can you, how can any one, judge of my feelings at this most strange adventure? The captain had never seen my wife! I had never left her on board that ship! — The light broke in suddenly upon my comprehension. There had been another ship, but bound, alas! for India, lying alongside of the one in which I had taken our passage for America; and that ship had sailed the very evening I had returned to London. Blind, blind idiot! I had mistaken the ships! How could I read the name upon her stern? It was as much as I could do to see if she had a stern at all! I had sent the wife of my bosom a long solitary voyage to the Eastern Indies! She was with strangers — without a due provision for her commonest necessities, and, worse than all, without the slightest knowledge of my real intentions, by which she could understand that this was not a deliberate act of base and cruel desertion. Unlucky in every thing! my trade had made me so well known

on board every East Indiaman in the river, that the captain, (who knew me, although I could not see him,) expecting farther explanation, had not hesitated to receive my wife on board — and she, poor soul ! would not have asked a question after the order I had given her, had it been to save her own life, and mine into the bargain.


What was to be done? My first thought was, of course, to follow her immediately. I flattered myself I might overtake her at St. Helena, or catch her at the Cape; and I instantly returned to London, to make eager enquiries concerning the first ship that would sail for Calcutta. But disappointments came thick upon me. This had been the last ship of the Company's fleet for the season, and all the private ships had sailed before. I was obliged to resign myself to my fate, with whatever patience I could call to my aid. I waited upon my father-in-law, as I thought I owed him some explanation. It might have been merely

accidental, or my own fancy, but I thought he received and spoke to me coldly. Considering I was the husband of his only child, I certainly was surprised, and felt somewhat hurt. But I said nothing — and all I know is, the unfortunate have few friends !

I led a most uncomfortable life for many weeks. At length I heard of a ship going direct to Bombay from Portsmouth. My wife was gone to Calcutta ; but, as my first object was to be in the same quarter of the globe with her, I secured a passage on board this ship, and, turning my back once more upon the glories of my dear native city, I started for the coast. I rode on the outside of the Portsmouth coach, that I might get a view of London from the country. I remember my sensations were of a very mixed description as I sat upon the coach, looking back from time to time upon the dense cloud of smoke in which London was lost. My sensations were painful, inasmuch as I was quitting, I knew not for how long, the only

scene of life which custom had endeared to me — the only spot in the world in which I had felt till now an interest. They were pleasing, inasmuch as although every ten minutes took me another long long mile from London; still every ten minutes placed me, by another mile, nearer to my poor wife at Calcutta; and I felt it lighten the weight at my heart to keep an account of the milestones as my fellow-travellers told me that we passed them. At last, after a long stage, we stopped at Kingston. Here we changed horses — and here I would that I had died! for, miserable being that I am! here I met with one of my worst misfortunes — like all the rest, a consequence of that dire calamity which has robbed me of repose, and of every thing that I ever held dear and valuable, — even as I premised at the commencement of these sheets.


We stopped at Kingston to breakfast, as well as to change horses. I was so little accustomed to travel in this manner, and I was



so much discomposed by the heat, fatigue, and dust, that I asked for a chamber in which I might wash and refresh, and make myself neat, and more fit to be seen, intending, as I did, to go the rest of the way inside the coach. I changed my suit and shaved. All this I did very hastily, fearing that I should be too late; for the people of the inn were calling for me, and hurrying me, till I hardly knew if I stood on my head or my heels. When I reached the inn-door, by good luck, (as I then thought,) I felt for my purse. I searched in vain in my pocket; the coach waited for me; a young gentleman driver on the coach-box swore with a terrible oath that he would go without me. I had but a moment. I rushed back to the room in which I had changed my dress. The purse was lying on the table, full and heavy, well prepared as it was for the expenses of my journey. I seized it—put it into my pocket—ran down stairs and got into the coach, which instantly drove off. All this was done

in considerably less time than I have employed in writing it.

I fell asleep soon after we left the inn-door. I dreamed I was on the wide sea, which I had never before seen, and that it was full of wonders. But still it was more like a great river than an open sea. I thought that I soon arrived at a place full of buildings and shipping, and not very unlike the Custom-house in my own city. I thought this place was Calcutta, and that it was very hot. The first person I saw there was my wife, in her neat travelling-dress as when we parted; but she turned her back upon me. I told her I was her own husband, come all the way from London to comfort her. She said she had no husband; and, looking reproachfully at me, she was just leaving me, and mixing in a crowd of persons that now surrounded us, when I thought I raised my arm to stop her, and immediately it was seized and grasped by the strong hand of a tall man, whom I had not observed



till now, and who was no other than my wicked partner. Good God! I waked in a state of alarm and anxiety I can never forget. My arm was grasped in reality, by the strong hand of a tall man, as I waked in a cold sweat from my horrible dream. But he was a stranger to me; and, as soon as I could recollect my scattered senses, I asked him his business, and the reason of his violence. He was a stout hireling, sent after me from Kingston, who accused me, with very little ceremony, (indeed I may say none,) of having stolen a purse from a gentleman at the inn. I was too much astounded to answer or to resist; so he did with me as he liked, and gave me in charge to the constable of the village where he had stopped the coach. This man searched me, and soon produced a purse, certainly not my own, but very like it, and quite full of money. I now began to comprehend that, in my haste to recover my own purse, I must have been led by my unfortunate blindness into a wrong

chamber, from whence I must by mistake have taken another's. I explained the circumstance as well as I was able, considering the alarm I had been put into, asserting my innocence strenuously, and contending that, if I had taken accidentally another man's purse, I had left my own, which was as well furnished, in its place. By this time I had suffered them to lead me to a public-house, and found myself surrounded by my fellow-travellers, and many strangers, all, I must say, giving the whole benefit of their doubts to the accusing party. Here I underwent a stricter scrutiny, and, to my inexpressible mortification and discomfort, my own purse was found, out of its usual place, (the right hand pocket of my smalls,) in the pocket of my coat.


Reader, surely it has happened to you to search in vain, high and low, for something or other you have thought missing, and at last to find it in your pocket, if not in your hand; or to waste half a day looking for your spec-

tacles, with them all the while on your nose. If such, and I doubt it not, has been your own case, you will kindly feel pity for my situation, because you may comprehend and believe my innocence.

But every appearance was against me. It was soon recollected that I had left the company after a very hasty breakfast; and that, when the coach was ready, I was missing; that, when I did appear, my manner was hurried and disturbed; that I had completely changed my dress, and had gone to an upper chamber to shave off my whiskers (Heaven knows I never had any); and had sought to conceal myself by pursuing my journey inside the coach, whereas I had come from London on the outside; and that, upon the appearance of the messenger, I had manifested symptoms of excessive alarm and agitation. Every thing, and every body, told against me — every body felt it his duty not to listen to me — my fellow passengers groped in their pockets after their

own purses, or looked to their luggage. They all gave their names and addresses, unasked, to the constable, shrugged their shoulders, and pursued their journey: while I was taken back to Kingston in a post-chaise by an unmannerly constable and the original thief-catcher. I there underwent an examination before two magistrates, who required little more than the fact of the purse having been found upon me, and which was sworn to by the owner, to commit me to the prison at Kingston, there to await my trial at the ensuing assize.


For more reasons than one, I have been minute in my details. In the first place, as I before said, I have sought to beguile a few hours of a very miserable existence by a lengthened recital of my strange adventures. In the second, I cannot help clinging to a hope, however faint, that so they may reach the knowledge of one or two of those to whose friendship, although too weak to resist the appearances so powerful against me, I still look back as



a possession once dearly valued, and now deeply regretted. I have dwelt upon many matters, trifling in themselves, for yet another purpose. It has been my endeavour to place myself in character so distinctly before my reader as to make him the better able to sympathise with me in those situations of conspicuous degradation which I am now describing, and which were so eminently distressing to one of a nature averse from display, and sufficiently proud and sensitive. If I have succeeded in this attempt, my reader may conceive what was the state of my mind when I had leisure to ponder the events I have just recounted : — that leisure was the leisure of a prison !

Still I was sanguine — still the consciousness of perfect innocence encouraged me to look for an honourable acquittal ; and, in this fatal security, I disdained to employ counsel. The charge being one of a capital felony, I was informed that the law, probably from a humane

belief that innocence in such distress pleads best for itself, denied me the advantage of counsel to speak in my behalf; which I was told I should have had if the charge had not been so serious. This must be right since it is English law. I therefore trusted to my own plain statement of facts, borne out by the character for upright honesty which I knew I deserved, and which I felt sure I should obtain from many who had known me from my infancy, and who would, I felt equally sure, flock in crowds to support me at the critical moment that was fast approaching. But, after the perusal of these memoirs, let no man expect to meet with his desert in this world; let the villain thrive upon his ill-gotten riches; and let the thief, fearless of the halter, look on in safety, while the honest man loses both fortune and reputation, and narrowly escapes an ignominious death! Shall I be believed when I declare this wayward and cruel fate to have been my own? I was tried for my life, as



I expected; but, contrary to all expectation, no friends appeared, while crowds flocked in to testify against me — the prosecutor, who believed himself to have been robbed intentionally, the messenger, the constable, the people of the inn at Kingston, my fellow-passengers in the stage coach, &c. &c. all, all united to weave a strong chain of consistent, unanswerable evidence. Besides, there were many corroborating facts: I had been detected on my road to the coast, having taken a passage for India, whither I had already sent my wife and effects, and, with considerable mystery, having prepared professedly for a voyage to America.

In short, every thing was against me — every fresh circumstance that was produced helped to overwhelm me — every unlucky innocent act of my own tended one fatal way. At length I was called upon for my defence. The shock my feelings had received by the desertion of my friends had a violent and particularly unfortunate effect upon my nerves: I trembled, and

could hardly support myself. "A chair for the prisoner" was called for; I declined it, and, as well as I was able, I stood to begin my own uncounselled case. In a voice almost inaudible from emotion, I gave a plain statement; blind as I was, I could perceive that it obtained no credence with the jury, and excited but little interest in the audience. My agitation increased; for what I held dearest in the world, my reputation, was at stake and in the utmost peril. Almost in despair, I earnestly looked round me for some friendly face. I saw my father-in-law in the crowd. I called him to character, and he obeyed the call; but he did me more harm than good. He, good man, like the rest of my friends, had yielded to the tide of appearances and prejudice which was running so strong against me. He said little, and nothing that in itself could have hurt me; but he could not command his manner, and that was constrained; and his distress, when, on being questioned as to the relationship in which he

stood towards me, he mentioned his daughter, was so acute and so natural, that, while it excited a general feeling of interest for him and for her, it made as general an impression against me.

The judge summed up the evidence, and the jury pronounced a verdict of "Guilty!" The fatal words rung in my ears with the noise of a hundred death-bells — a giddiness came over me, and I fainted away.

When I came to myself, I was supported by two men to receive sentence of death. Good God! what a situation for an innocent man! I will not attempt to describe my sensations — I know of no words that can convey an adequate idea of the mental agony I suffered. A gentleman with a wig had the kindness to ask me, "what I had to say that sentence should not pass upon me to die according to law?" Alas! I had nothing to say, and, if I had, nothing would have been believed from me. If I was short-sighted, justice was stone-blind! The

judge was adjusting the awful black cap, when an attorney, (who had disposed of all the business in which he had been engaged that assize, and had therefore time to be humane and honest on his own account,) casting his eye carelessly over the indictment, as it lay open before the clerk of the arraigns, started, and hastily wrote a few words upon a scrap of paper, which he threw across to me in the dock. With the help of my spectacles, which were fortunately on my nose, I read these words, — “ A flaw in the indictment ! Move the court ! — Your’s in haste to command.” Move the court ? — The law and I had never met before — I knew not what it meant, nor what to do : all I knew was that death and disgrace were staring me in the face. I cast an imploring look at the attorney, who instantly whispered a disengaged counsel who had just before dealt with his last brief. The young barrister immediately addressed the court : — “ My lord, on the part of the prisoner, I move in arrest of judgment.”

The court was amazed,—and so was I. The indictment was handed to the judge, who seemed much surprised, and somewhat incredulous. After looking keenly through the parchment, to assure himself that my safety was inevitable, and, after a few words of angry parole with the peccant clerk of the arraigns, who had thus as it were allowed the halter to slip from round the neck of an innocent man, he threw off the black cap with a jerk, and informed me that the humanity of the law often allowing a technical error to save the greatest criminals, it had become his duty to postpone the passing of sentence, and lay my case before the twelve judges. (Alas! twelve! — when one had so nearly destroyed me!) It was likewise, he said, his duty to inform me, that my life might probably be saved. Then, in a tone of great bitterness, he congratulated me upon this circumstance; taking pains to assure me, that had it not been for an accidental error, which had thrown the undeserved protection of the law around me, there

was more than enough in the aggravated character of my case to have determined him to leave me to a fate which so justly belonged to crimes like mine. He said that he was an old man, and had lived to see many very deplorable exhibitions of the depravity of human nature; that he had met with many profligate and wicked characters, and some hardened sinners; “but never,” continued this unconsciously unjust judge,—“never has it been till now my fortune to meet with such an instance of consummate hypocrisy as is presented in your person. I may say, you are a finished actor—you are even dressed for the part: your hair is cut, and your cravat is plaited for it. The canting tone of your voice too—all is in keeping! You will retire, sir, in custody; and should your life be saved (which I am bound to say it may), and should you not be too old in iniquity to profit by good advice (which I fear you are), let me recommend you to consider the event of this day, as an useful and awful warning, instead

of making it (as I doubt not you will do) the subject of a ribald jest with your loose companions.—Gaoler, remove your prisoner !” The indictment had charged me (God knows how untruly !) with having taken the purse “with force and arms, and against the peace of our Sovereign Lord the King, his crown, and dignity.” Had it, as I am informed, only said something about a “statute made and provided,” I, who never used force for any thing in my life, nor any arms but those I was born with, who love my King, and know not what a statute is, should long ago have filled a felon’s grave. To make short of this part of my history, in a few weeks, by due course of law, I found myself with my life preserved, my liberty restored, and my fame and happiness utterly blasted !


My first act, after my enlargement, was to call upon the friendly attorney whose timely interference had saved my life. He drew himself up when he saw me, and refused my proffered

hand. "No, sir," said he; "I cannot accept your thanks, while I should be ashamed of your acquaintance. I hold it my duty to the profession to which I belong, never, when not engaged for the prosecution, to allow the life of any man to be taken away in my sight, without giving him every chance the law admits him to. I will send you my bill, with the fee paid to counsel. But, for Mr. —, as well as for myself, I must decline any personal intercourse with one whose acquaintance could not fail to dishonour our character, and injure our practice." With these words, he motioned me to the door, and desired his clerk to show me down stairs. This person elbowed me as I passed him, and slammed the door in my face.

Behold me now arrived almost at the last stage of my misfortunes. My reputation, which I prized so highly, was gone; my friends, whom I had loved so dearly, deceived by false appearances, were gone too; and I was an outcast from that society in which for many

years I had filled so respectable a place. It is not surprising that my health should sink under such an accumulation of unmerited suffering. I had a long and severe fit of illness; for many weeks, my wretched life was despaired of; and, when I did begin to mend, it was by very slow and painful degrees. A nervous fever had fixed itself upon my spirits, and there were moments in which I almost regretted the accident by which my existence had been prolonged. At length, my naturally good constitution, fortified as it had been by a life of tranquillity and temperance, surmounted my disease; and, after a tedious convalescence, I recovered. During my illness, I had made earnest efforts to resign myself to my strange fate; and those efforts were not wholly vain. I was greatly supported by the feeling of conscious innocence, which I would not have bartered for any degree of earthly prosperity whatever. One source of consolation too still remained for me: my wife was alive, although

far distant; and to her I looked as to the only tie that still bound my wishes and affections to this world. I was not without a vague hope that, through her means, some explanation might be brought about with my father-in-law. She had now been absent nearly two years, for much time had been occupied by the cruel occurrences which I have attempted to describe, as well as by my tedious illness and more tedious recovery. I had contrived to send some money to her, and I had written once to inform her of my strange mistake concerning the ships at Gravesend, and to assure her, in moving terms, of my innocence on that score: but never could I conquer my reluctance to even hint at subsequent events. How was I to tell her that her husband had been tried for theft—found guilty—and only, by a mere accident, remained unchanged! The bare idea of such a disclosure distressed me beyond measure; and one attempt that I did force myself to make to enter upon the humiliating



subject by letter brought back the complaint upon my nerves with such violence that I was obliged to relinquish it. In short, I resolved to spare myself for the present; so I wrote to my wife to desire her to sail in the first ship for England. I told her many things had happened during her absence of a most distressing and extraordinary nature — that I would inform her of every one of them in time — but that my health and spirits were weak, and that she must indulge me in my earnest wish not to recur to any past events whatever, till I should voluntarily begin the subject myself. I called upon her to show that perfect obedience to my wishes for which she had always been so remarkable. I charged her, moreover, to know me in future by no other name than “Perkins,” and to call herself, from the moment she received my letter, “Mrs. Perkins.” (This name I had assumed immediately after my trial: I had borne it ever since, where I lived in an obscure street in the city of London; and

my nurse and physician had known me by no other.) I proceed with my letter to my wife: I desired her merely to land in England, then to take a passage instantly on board a packet for Calais. There I bade her go to the hotel of Mons. — Rue —, and await my arrival, — always under the name of “Perkins;” and I ended with these words: “Be not uneasy at my altered appearance — I am a man of much sorrow. Be not surprised if I should long be silent on all that has passed — your curiosity shall have full satisfaction in time: with your accustomed obedience to my wishes, avoid all topicks which can carry my mind back to my former state. — Let us have new amusements, new prospects, new names. — I am changed in many ways, but you will find me the same in my constant affection for you. Till death, your faithful husband, Peter Perkins.”

I despatched my letter, and calculated that it would be from nine to ten months before I could hope to see my wife. I endeavoured, by

frequent little excursions into the country round about London, to make the time pass less heavily, always keeping my assumed name and character, and carefully avoiding those places which are the most frequented by my brethren of the city. My health continued to improve, but no change of scene, no pure country air, no faint hope of future comfort, could lighten the load that oppressed my spirits; and the dreaded disclosure I had promised to make to my wife acted as a spell, that broke my slumbers by night, and imbibited all my waking hours.


Month after month passed away, and I now expected her speedy arrival. I went to Calais. It was late in the evening when I arrived, and I had some difficulty in finding the hotel of Mons. —. With a beating heart, and trembling knees, I asked if “a Mrs. Perkins happened to be there?” More voices than were at all necessary answered in the affirmative. Every door flew open with officious haste, and,

in less than a minute, I stood before her. She received me with gentle kindness, spoke of the weather, and gave me time to recover from the agitation of my nerves. We drank tea together, and took a quiet walk by moonlight. I can ill express the gratitude I felt for the delicate and kind manner in which she showed her obedience to my wishes, and abstained from all questions. Still, I could not rally my spirits, and felt like a criminal before her; and I hardly dared to raise my eyes from the ground. I was pained to observe that she too was somewhat altered. Her complexion was faded, and, even with my poor eyes, I could perceive that she had helped it with a little rouge. But this circumstance, which at any former time I should have resented highly, now only filled me with tenderness. The Indian climate had injured her health, perhaps had reached her liver ! and she had attempted to repair the ravages it had made upon her bloom by a little innocent art, which I, for whom it was em-

ployed, might well appreciate and excuse. Time passed on: not once, during several weeks, had she suffered a word to drop from her lips by which I could perceive that her mind dwelt upon the past, or that she felt the smallest concern as to the future; and I began to think there *was* a ninth wonder in the world — an incurious woman!

But, one morning, when I was waiting for her at the breakfast-table, and reading the English news, I perceived that she entered the room with a degree of solemnity that was not usual with her. She took a letter from her pocket, and placed it with dignity on the table: then, putting her handkerchief to her eyes, “Mr. Perkins,” said she, “I feel very awkward — I am unwilling either to pain or to hurry you; but my situation is extremely awkward: we have passed a whole month together, and a subject, absolutely necessary to my peace of mind, has never yet been alluded to by you. You must allow me to say that it is

time the promises contained in *that* letter should be performed." This mild reproach was too just, too natural, to excite in me any feelings but those of kindness and confidence. My heart was warmed and opened. I had, indeed, passed a whole month in her society, and a month of perfect tranquillity—I had almost said happiness. We had never before lived so perfectly well together; for there used to be, in the best of times, frequent little unpleasantnesses and jarrings, which I had considered as inseparable from the married state. In former days, she never would tolerate any literary amusement. I never had read aloud to her any book, but the ledger, excepting once when her eyes were sore, and she wanted to study a new recipe for making sour crout. But, now, she was become intellectual! we had come to the end of the "Pilgrim's Progress," and were half-way in Mr. Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield!" She was an altered woman! The ice was broken, and I resolved to tell her every



thing. "Mrs. Perkins," said I, "this very day your wishes shall be realised; from this moment I give you my full confidence; you deserve it for your exemplary discretion and obedience to my directions. Oh, my dear!" continued I, with considerable emotion, "to secure such a happy meeting, who would repine at our former miserable parting?" — "Former miserable parting!" said she, and she turned half round to stare at me: "Mr. Perkins! what *do* you mean?"

At this moment the door was thrown open with violence, and another lady rushed into the room with an open letter in her hand. Good God! what a sight for me to see — and live! This, indeed, was my wife — my real wife from India. (She had heard enough from the people of the hotel to justify the excitement in which she presented herself before us.) For some minutes, we were all three silent; she from excess of rage, I from utter despair, and the other lady from astonishment. I handed

this last-mentioned person to the window ; I put on my best double spectacles, and I examined her closely with the light full upon her features. Too truly, she was a stranger to me ! but she was not unlike my wife ; and that unhappy circumstance, acting as it did in concert with my fatal defect of sight, had caused me completely to mistake her. I could now perceive (alas ! how much too late !) that she was considerably older than my wife ; that the rouge, which, to my poor naked eye, had seemed but as a slight tinge, was laid on thickly. In short, as I looked upon her, I lost every hope of making my innocence apparent to Mrs. Perkins.

Good heavens ! what an explanation followed ! Jealousy had transformed my poor woman into a perfect fury ; she accused me of —but I should be ashamed to repeat her words ! The other lady forgot all her dignity of deportment, and called loudly upon me to perform my promise, and to marry her directly.

Each presented me with an open letter signed “ Peter Perkins.” One of these I had no difficulty in acknowledging — it was my last letter to my wife, desiring her to quit India without loss of time, and to meet me at Calais. The other lady’s letter ran thus: — “ Madam, I am so well satisfied with your last answer to my advertisement, that I have to request you will forthwith give me the meeting at the hôtel of Monsieur —, Rue —, at Calais. If, after a short time spent in each other’s society, we think we can be happy together, and should your person, manners, and disposition accord with the description you have favoured me with, I shall be happy to make you my lawful wife, bring you to England, and present you to my friends — taking care to conceal from them the circumstances of our first acquaintance, which they, and a foolishly punctilious world, might consider as too romantick for one of my years, but which the cautious timidity of my temper has induced me to propose. I wish

you to see me before you make up your own mind. I am an elderly man, silent, and grave; formal in my manners, precise in my dress, and retired in my habits; a defect in my sight, and a stoop in my gait, serve but to add to the peculiarity of my appearance. If, however, I have reason to flatter myself that you have no objection to me, when you shall have seen me, such as I am, and have made some trial of my temper, as I said before, I shall be happy to make you my wife. To prevent curiosity, it may be as well if you honour my name by assuming it at once. I remain, Madam, your most obedient servant, Peter Perkins."

By the time I had come to the end of this letter, and had begun in some degree to unravel this perplexing maze of fatal coincidences, both ladies were in strong hystericks. What could I do? I had never before seen any one in hystericks, and I thought they were both dying. I ran to my wife, but she pushed me from her; I approached the other lady, and

my wife's screams were dreadful to hear. They soon brought not only Monsieur and Madame —, but half Calais to their assistance. The French love a scene, and we indulged them. At last Madame — succeeded in quieting my wife, and Monsieur — tranquillised the other lady. I cleared the room, and then addressed my wife. "Mrs. Perkins," said I, "I hope you are satisfied; I hope you have sufficiently exposed a husband who may have been unfortunate, but who has not been wilfully guilty. It is too true I have for some time mistaken this lady for you — my unfortunate defect of sight —" — "Hold your tongue, sir," replied this infuriated woman, interrupting me; "hold your tongue, and do not add insult to falsehood. Mistake that Jezebel for me! Thank God, for stark blind, *that* would be impossible. Oh, Mr. B——, Mr. B——, none are so blind as those that *won't* see!" She flung out of the room with these cutting words, and I have never set eyes upon her since!

It is now six years since this, the finishing stroke, took place. There is now little left for me to say before I take a long leave of my reader. My wife, when she left me in the manner I have stated, went directly to England, and to her father. She told her own story, in her own way, and took care to expose me wherever my unlucky name was known. My former friends were already extremely well disposed to believe any thing in my disfavour. I read my own story (it may be supposed how garbled!) in the newspapers: it appeared in the shape of a warning against a notorious character, "One Peter B——, alias Peter Perkins." My father-in-law is since dead. He has left his daughter sole heir to his wealth, but under the conditions that she should resume and use only her maiden name, and never see her wretched husband more, nor help him with one farthing: in failure of which conditions she will forfeit the whole property in favour of the next heir. How I have sup-

ported life under all these trials is a riddle to myself. Sometimes I am half resolved to turn my back for ever upon my native land, and seek a new existence with Mr. Birkbeck in America ; but there is a spell upon me, and it binds me to the spot where I first drew my breath ; and I do believe I should pine and die in any other atmosphere.

Perhaps I may be expected to allude once more to the lady with whom, the attentive reader will recollect, I was left *tête-à-tête* at the hotel of Monsieur —, at Calais, by my own wife. That lady took advantage of the opportunity thus afforded her, and made a pathetick appeal to my finest feelings. I had no better, indeed no other, compensation to offer her for the uneasiness and disappointment I had so unwittingly occasioned her, and I begged her acceptance of a sum which was the full half of the small pittance I had reserved from the wreck of my fortune. She accepted it with apparent confusion and reluctance ; but, I soon

discovered, was the first to laugh at me for my generosity. I likewise found that it was long since that lady had a character to lose. She had come to Calais upon a speculation, having answered an advertisement which appeared in a publick print under the head of "Matrimony." The advertisement was a hoax. The reader knows who was the victim! That lady sent me, towards the end of the year, a great pugnosed, red-headed, ill-disposed brat, of at least a year and a half old; and all I know about it is, that the law obliges me to educate, provide for, and own him; and that already he is the worst plague of my most miserable existence.

PETER B——.

L.

G.



ON SUPERSTITION ;

WITH

O'SULLIVAN'S STORY OF O'DONNELL'S
BREANN.

EVERY body says, that all superstition tends to weaken the mind and mislead it. I suppose it does, since every body says so. Yet who shall say that all those impulses, so natural to all men, which we are in the habit of calling superstitions, are unmixed folly or ill? They are not only natural to man, but inseparable from him, in every condition, the rudest or the most cultivated. Superstition is the only passion which no act of reflection or will can entirely cast away. To endeavour to forget its impressions is only to recall them; and, appealing directly, as they do, to a sense of our own weakness in a world of wonders, they are so

much stronger than any course of reasoning which is ordinarily opposed to them, that, each time they are recalled, they are more deeply fixed. No system of ethical or natural philosophy but must fail when brought into conflict with that inborn pervading principle from which superstition derives its power. Whatever with one man is speculative belief is with another doubt; and by a third may be called superstition. And, in a world of doubt, in which human sagacity and industry, having explored the machinery of but some hundredth part of the effects we daily see around us, cannot comprehend the cause of one, it is a somewhat violent conclusion to say that the belief of things which have been strongly, however rarely, vouched, is childish folly, because they cannot be referred to what vain man, in his utter ignorance of the invisible agency by which that world is governed, loosely terms the "ordinary course of nature." He who professes to impugn these things, on what he calls the evidence of pro-

bability, must begin by rejecting the best evidence by which all other things are tried, that of positive testimony, for the sake of the weak negative evidence of his own imperfect experience. I will not believe that to be true which you tell me you have seen, because I never saw the like of it myself, and which, because I never saw the like of it myself, it pleases me to call improbable.

All evidence of supernatural appearances begins at least with this advantage,—that it rests on positive testimony; the evidence against them hangs on a mere theory of probabilities, which, if it were admitted as conclusive in judicial matters, would acquit every felon of every act the like of which the jury have never witnessed, or have themselves never been tempted to do. I will not believe that you saw the murder of which you tell me; I believe it to be out of the ordinary course of nature, because I never saw a murder committed; nor, judging from my own experience, can I under-

stand the passion which can incite any man to commit murder.

But there are speculations concerning preternatural agencies of which we have received no direct testimony, which may, therefore, with more appearance of justice, be called superstitious. Concerning these, it may be a problem not very easy of solution whether some of those shuddering fancies which visit in darkness and solitude, though, doubtless, assisted by a sense of insecurity and defencelessness, are always illusions wrought upon a mind weakened by these circumstances of position, or whether they may not be produced by a wise abstraction from those occupations which, in busy life, lead the mind away from the investigation and confession of abstract truth.

Superstition, so called, does not always lead to ill. Of this we may be sure, that the traditional superstitions which are frequent in a romantick, mountainous, and woody country, or on the deep,—where the operations of nature

are wild and *gigantick*, and difficult to be explored, and where the arm of the law is short and powerless, — often tend to prevent violence and keep the peace. Those whom no terror of the law would restrain may yet be checked from murder by the dread of being ghosted. This is remarkable in cold countries, the countries of twilight, far away from the sun's path, where the many hours of darkness invite to secret acts of blood, but where the fear of ghosts prevails in equal proportion. In the languages of southern Europe there is no word to express the idea of a ghost, so familiar to the Saxons, the British, the Danes, and Norsemen.

Second-sight, — the inexplicable, incredible, but undeniable, privilege of all Scotsmen to the north of the Grampians, and claimed by not a few to the south, — is, doubtless, not easily compatible with what we think and believe of the great system by which Providence makes known its purposes for the governance of man.

Still, so long as truth is to be separated from falsehood by the direct concurrent testimony of credible witnesses, instances accumulate upon us which are not easily or lightly to be disposed of. We are apt to refer these to mere coincidence. It may be true. But, at the same time, this solution, though exceedingly easy, is not, perhaps, in the end, very satisfactory. I know not what to make of the following story. It was told me by an old Irish gentleman of honour, — of honour so unquestionable as to make it very unjust to doubt his word, — and of a time of life not yet sufficiently advanced to make it very safe to express such doubt. I give it as he told it to me. His veracity stands pledged to me for the truth of it, and his tone of deep feeling bore testimony to the sincerity of his belief in what he told.

O'Sullivan's Story of O'Donnell's Breann.

When I was a boy, it was a common saying, "Who is there in the whole world, and miles beyond it, who has not heard of O'Donnell's Breann?" and, though the last of that stock (of the old leading princely branch of it I mean) now slumbers in an English grave, between which and the district over which her forefathers bore sway the Bristol Channel rolls its tide in many a league of longitude, through Donegal the tradition of the Breann is still handed down with the name of that extinct though not forgotten race of its once glorious princes. Her father was my dear friend; we had lived together as brothers from our college days. He was left early a widower, with an only daughter. His fortunes, like those of many other Irish families of high historic name, had been transmitted to him ruined by the extravagance of three or four wasteful generations. Their family pride was the only


inheritance they had left to him unimpaired. But his was a pride of gentle strain, chastened by mildness and courtesy, and mortified by the consciousness of how small a part was left to him to fill in the history of a country where his name had once stood so powerful and so high, and by the gloomy reflection that with him even the empty honours of a name would soon be extinguished, and for ever.

His mansion—castle it still was called—had been transformed, by the bad taste of his grandfather, into a square whitened house, with offices at the back, separated from it by the remains of the ancient moat. In the front, a large hall door, surmounted by a Palladian portico, stood always open by day, in testimony of hereditary hospitality; a sad contrast with the bricked up windows of many of the rooms, which his decayed condition had dismantled and closed from the light. A large space of meadow-land lay stretched before it, of that deep and glossy hue which he who

has not seen the face of the Emerald Isle knows not. The low green banks which traversed the plain in parts, surmounted by thin straggling tufts of furze and broom, broke not to the eye at a very small distance the continuity of the level surface. At the extremity of it was a little burying ground, which, surrounded by a low wall, and shadowed by two gable ends, (the only remains of the ancient church,) contained, in humble tombs, the bones of many generations of the O'Donnells. Yet was each of these tombs surrounded by the graves of successive generations of peasants, bequeathing this simple testimony of a fidelity reaching beyond the boundary of human service. How strikingly do these small Irish churches and burying-grounds, in their ruins, perpetuate to a Roman Catholick chief, and a Roman Catholick neighbourhood, the bitter, but cherished traces of a faith long persecuted, and twice pursued (though unextinguished still) by the state policy of the Tudors and the

Cromwells, with the penalties of both civil and military desolation !

Behind the burying-ground, and at the furthest extremity of the meadows, flowed a broad and gentle river, towards which the surrounding mountains stooped gradually into the plain, along the lowest part of which, and not much higher than the river's bed, a straight road led, for about a mile, from the castle of the O'Donnells to their graves. This was the only straight and level road in the country. A melancholy moral ! It was on the brow of a hill, which immediately overhung the castle and commanded a view of the whole scene I have described, that, towards the close of a fine September evening, in the year 1799, I sat with my friend. We had been all the day shooting on the mountains. O'Donnell was always fond of resting here awhile. The landscape which lay before us, though not of picturesque beauty, was full of associations of pleasing melancholy. The rock on which we



sat, which is still called "O'Donnell's Stone," was the seat from which, through many ages of power, the chief of that family had customarily dispensed justice and awarded sentence, in cases of crime and of civil contention, to the people of the surrounding district.

The events that were then distracting Ireland had given an anxious and gloomy turn to our conversation. The rebellion had been extinguished in blood. Many a generous and virtuous heart, which beat high for what it believed to be its country's glory and freedom, had entered deeply into the fatal errors of that wild revolt, and, stung with the sense of violated faith and grievance unredressed, had incurred the moral guilt of engaging itself, and enlisting the feelings and fortunes of others, even to the life, in the peril of that desperate stake. Many, partaking of the warm enthusiasm, and kindling with the highest and purest aspirations of misguided patriotism, had ended by paying the penalty of treason; and the

fondest hopes of many a family had perished by the sword and the gibbet, or were withering in worse than the orphanage of the tomb, the separation of imprisonment and exile. How far my poor friend's heart had knit itself to the unhappy objects of the united Irishmen is not for me, who knew that heart and all its secrets, to reveal, although it has, long since, been cold, and the misdoings of those sad days have been covered over by the general amnesty of time. — O'Donnell had a lofty spirit, felt keenly for his country, and was a Roman Catholick. His domestick fortunes and his publick ambition were doubly blasted, and were left a dreary waste, over which his recollections and his hopes hovered constantly, but could find no resting place. He thought he was not superstitious. But of that matter who can certify himself?

A tradition had existed for many ages in his house, and had been handed down with great

reverence, through each link of its hereditary chain.

Most of the great families of Ireland had their Banshee.

The spirit of evil augury to the O'Donnells was said to haunt the walls of their castle in the shape of a large black dog, which appeared only at rare intervals, and then to portend the death of the chief; which event, in the successive generations, had always and invariably followed soon after each of these appearances. Some few old people reported that they had seen him just before the death of my friend's father; one or two, very old, just before that of his grandfather. But the Banshee was known to all by the name of "O'Donnell's "Breann." (I said that my friend thought he was not superstitious; yet he had ever, in conformity with long established custom, ordered that, among the many dogs who habitually live in and about an Irish house, not one of that ill-omened colour should be reared or ad-

mitted, neither to the castle, nor even to the cabins of the surrounding neighbourhood.)

We talked of Ireland; of her desolate and wasted state; of some of her best families in ruin and proscription; and the sun was setting, a sad symbol, over O'Donnell's castle. And, "Oh," said my friend, "when life was young in us both, O'Sullivan, how little did we expect I should ever have to say to you how truly I grieve that that sun had not gone down over my grave, long, long before these days came upon my country, and me, and all that is mine. For my young girl's sake, for the sake of some few, very few (and he squeezed my hand as he spoke), who would mourn for me, I cannot wish to die. But, oh, I wish I *had* died before this, and that it had been the fate of some other master to mourn over the extinction of that house and its name." We were both gazing on the castle as he spoke. — And the words had scarcely fallen when we



saw clearly, very clearly, through the distance, a black dog, of the hound kind, rush out through the great door which stood open to the portico. The beast stopped at a few yards from the front of the house, as dogs will do, to look round for their master. He trotted backwards and forwards a little while before the front windows. He put his nose to the ground, — till, at last, as if he had caught some scent which he had been casting about for, he set off along the road, with tail and ears down, sometimes raising his head, and opening wide his unlucky looking jaw, as if to bellow out how sure he was of his game, as he went along. But we were too far off to hear the creature's note.

My friend's hand was on mine — I felt the pressure become lighter and lighter. He raised it gradually, till it was on a level with his shoulder. There it remained stretched forth. Not a word either of us spoke — not a breath could be heard from either. But we looked

earnestly in our silence, following with our eyes slowly the dog's course, as he went on. For a moment, and one only, O'Donnell's eyes turned on me; and mine, as if from the same impulse, met his glance. It was one of strange and fearful meaning. But instantly we returned to the object which had entirely fixed our attention. The dog proceeded, without stop or doubt, for nearly half a mile along the straight road. He paused. The scent which he pursued seemed to fail him on some low ground, and he cast about with his nose down. At length he raised his head on high. He seemed as though he were uttering one deep howl, like that of a blood-hound who has recovered the track of his prey. He leaped a low gate, which stood in the gap of a broom-covered bank to the right, and pursued his course, careering with a long sullen gallop across some large green enclosures, fetching a half circle round a single old ash tree which stood at a few hundred yards' distance from

the road, till he came round again into it, at about a quarter of a mile from the spot where he had left it. He then, without again quitting it, galloped on, a striding pace, until he reached the little wicket of the low churchyard wall, bounding over which he was in an instant lost to our view — and we saw him no more.

During the latter part of this scene my friend had risen slowly from his seat — I had followed his example. Again he grasped my wrist firmly: — his body bending forward for some moments after he had lost sight of the hound, O'Donnell's straining eyes were fixed eagerly on the churchyard, as if to endeavour to catch a sight of the animal beyond its enclosure. But in vain. The ruined church and churchyard stood bare upon the plain, so that, from the height on which we were, we could not have failed to see any form, even a much smaller one than that of the dog, had any passed beyond the abode of the dead. My

friend's face had become ghastly pale. He dropped my arm, and, in utter silence, walked forward, descending the hill towards the castle. I followed him, and, in a few moments, took courage to speak. "Why, good God! "O'Donnell, my man, what is all this? Nay, "speak to me! This is madness! You saw "a dog leave your house, — what is there in "that? A custom, founded on a silly old "womanish story, has banished all poor black "curs from the demesne. What *can* be "more natural than that your servants have "turned a stray hound of such a colour out "of your house? and, depend upon it, they "gave him such a reception there, that the "poor beast was not disposed to stop till he "had got far enough." — My friend turned half round, and faced me; and, raising his hand to point to where we last had seen him, "to the "churchyard!" said he, but in a voice, deep, solemn, and almost stifled with emotion, such as I never before had heard pass his lips.

“ O’Sullivan, do not endeavour to deceive me,
“ — do not be insincere. You saw him too.
“ A dog scared away from the castle would not
“ have thus hung upon a scent, and you well
“ know that nothing, man or beast, had gone
“ before on that track, for a full hour that we
“ have had the whole country in view. You
“ well know it — come, the sun is set — let us
“ talk no more about it, — ’tis useless — let us
“ go in.”

During the whole of that evening he spoke little on any subject, and only once on that.

It was after a long, melancholy pause. — “ But
“ why,” said he, “ why leave the road? Why
“ make that long sweep round the old town-
“ land ash-tree?” — “ And is not that enough,”
said I, “ to make you laugh at the whole
“ thing? Is it not plain he was on the heel of
“ some hare, or other small thing, which we
“ did not see? Why, man, that was not the
“ way to the ——” — “ To the churchyard,”
said he. He shook his head, and, with a sad

smile, of any feeling but that which ordinarily makes a man smile, he took my hand across the table at which we sat, and was silent again. I would not have left him in such a state of mind, but that business of the utmost importance required my attendance in the Four Courts; and, the next morning, I was obliged to leave for Dublin.

As we parted, "O'Donnell," said I, "in a fortnight, or about, I shall be able to come down again, and I will find you in better heart, and many a day we'll laugh together over the nonsense of yesterday." — Poor fellow! — In this world we never met, nor ever will meet, again!

On the seventh day after we parted, I received a letter, sealed with black, and dated on the seventh from that on which we had been together on the hill. It told me how, on that morning, he had walked out early, and returned ill to death. He had had a fit of some sort, and before night had expired. I was bidden

to the funeral, which was fixed for a few days after. On my journey, and not above seven or eight miles from the castle, my chaise broke down. There was no repairing it. Knowing that the funeral would take place that day, and that I had a chance of being too late, I struck across the mountains for the nearest way on foot. My path lay over the hill, where, the last time, I had been with my poor friend, and close by the "O'Donnell's Stone." The face of the country was much changed. The October had set in with heavy rains. The river had swelled; and much of the plain, and part of the road, were flooded. As I paused for a while to look down on the castle, (oh! never again to hold the master of a race which had for so many years lived there in glory and decay,) the great door, which I now for the first time saw closed by day in sign of mourning, began to open, and, presently, the priest, at the head of a large train of mourners, issued forth. Then came the coffin, followed by all the nearest

blood. O'Donnell's poor little girl, led by the hand of a cousin, was next to it. The procession moved slowly along the road, and, as I would not be able to reach in time to join it, I had but to watch it, with eyes full of tears, as it took the road to my friend's last home.

At about half a mile along the road the waters were out, and the train was fain to turn off on the rising ground through the gate on the right. Oh ! it was the very course the Breann had taken ! It made the circuit round the ash-tree. It came into the road again, at the very spot, as near as I can recollect, where the Breann had gone before. It then pursued the straight road again to the churchyard wicket.

Close within, the melancholy circle was formed round the grave, which now, surmounted only by a small white wooden cross, shows where reposes in peace the last chief of a princely house.

G.

MRS. ALLINGTON'S PIC NIC.

Thou hast a speculation in thine eyes.

Macbeth.

SCENE. — *A Feast — Lords, Ladies, &c.*

SHALL I own it at once, and at starting? Yes, I will. For it would be a shame to deceive people into supposing me better than I am, particularly those who are kindly disposed to read my story, and thus to make acquaintance with me on my own terms. I certainly did deliberately set to work to listen to a conversation which was never intended for my ear, nay, worse, which was never intended for any ear, except the conjugal, and rather reluctant, ear, to which, in all the confidence of supposed privacy, it was addressed. I anticipate the

animadversion. — It was a rascally, manifestly rascally, thing of me. But the temptation was strong; and I need not tell you, ladies and gentlemen, flesh is frail.

The day was sultry: the sun was still high. I had just assisted my hospitable friend and his lady, and blooming progeny, below stairs, to despatch a substantial luncheon; and we were not to dine till six. I had retired to my own apartment, "as is my custom of an afternoon," for the declared purpose of severe study, but the real one of undisturbed idleness. My long chair (I hate French names for English furniture, and never use them) was at the open window. The window commanded a fine view of a country that smiled in its noontide slumber. The cattle slumbered too. An article on political economy lay open on my knee: it had already disproved its own theory; for I felt that the demand had in no degree kept pace with the supply. The ivory knife had fallen from my hand, and the contagious repose was

stealing fast over me, when the spirit-stirring voice of Mrs. Allington issued through the open glass doors of the room beneath. The woman tempted me; and I listened. She was the wife of my host, honest John Allington; so he was called by all that knew him. Every body loved him, for a plain, good, honourable man; and his house was popular with all persons of all ages, not less for the frankness of his character and of his welcome, than for the sake of the never-failing amusements, and ever-thronging society, purveyed by the care of his adroit and busy lady. I will not say that to love her was an universal passion. Yet all were attentive to her, and all liked her dinners, and her suppers, and her dances, and her "little musick parties," as ladies are wont very properly to denominate those occasions on which they open their houses for company, their windows for air, and their grand pianofortes for "little musick," God wot. And she had three pretty grown-up daughters, who——

But let the lady tell her own secrets in the following conversation, which I have already owned I overheard, and which, in strict confidence, ladies and gentlemen, I will repeat to you :—

“ Adey was twenty-two last March, though I call her two years younger ; Maria will never see twenty again ; and Julia will be nineteen to-morrow. — Something must be done,” continued she, after a long pause, during which it appeared she had failed of the answer to which she considered herself entitled — “ Something must be done, Mr. A.”

“ And why ?” answered the quiet, upright man.

“ Why ? — why because the little ones will be big ones soon ; they are treading fast on their sisters’ heels ; and because my constitution is too weak to answer the claims of more than three daughters out at the same time. You never help me. Do, dear Mr. A. ; think of something that may get the girls off.”

"Let them alone, my love," replied Mr. Allington, "let them alone, and you'll see they'll go off of themselves."

"Yes," rejoined the lady, somewhat pettishly, "I suppose they will, but not *by* themselves. You'll have them go off with the tutor, Mr. Docet; or the curate, Mr. Proseit; or the bailiff's son, young Whistler; or ——"

"I don't know a better man any where than our curate," said the unrelenting husband; "and as for the ——"

"Pray, hold your tongue, Mr. A., unless you wish me to go into a fit."

And then there was a pause on both sides, and no fit was gone into. And then the pause was broken (as is so seldom the case) by the lady. But her voice had a coaxing tone, as she resumed the subject.

"My dear, dear John, they are your own children — think of that. Surely you must feel a little anxiety to see them happy?"

"Thank God, I do see them happy!" re-

plied the contented gentleman, and drew the window-blind quite up. — “ And you shall see them happy too. Look at them, my dear : three, four, five, six, well grown, healthy girls, romping in the field there with their three little brothers. It’s a fine sight, and I can’t say I’m in a hurry to lose it. If they were not happy they would not laugh so heartily, and run and jump so.”

“ Just like the rest of your obsolete notions,” answered the prolific and provident mother. “ Happy, indeed ! — Get them rich husbands, Mr. A., and then you *might* see them happy, and have something to be proud of. — Adelaide ! Maria ! Julia ! ” she screamed, putting her head so far out of the lower window that I thought it prudent to make a corresponding movement of mine in the inverse ratio of the upper : “ Come in directly ! — You’ll be ruined in the sun there without your bonnets ! — My dear Mr. A.,” lowering her voice, and resuming the dialogue, “ we must think of



something for them : we must get some of them married."

" Nothing is easier," replied the husband in a dry, business-like tone, lowered, whether by design or not, to a whimsical unison with that in which her last words were spoken ; " nothing is easier, my dear Mrs. A. Surely, surely, you were not asleep last night — no, I am sure you were not — when I told you that I had a good offer for Adey. Our neighbour, Tom Burton, proposed to me for her yesterday. If she were to marry him, she would only have to go a couple of miles from us. We might see her every day — lovely, and happy, and dear to us, even as in this happy hour, with sunshine and home all around her, only with one more affection to sweeten the long life which, please God, is before her ; and that need not make us je lous, my dear Mrs. A. She has known him from infancy, and I am sure she likes him."

" I flatter myself a daughter of mine can

like any man when I tell her he is a proper match for her," said the justly proud mother. "But Mr. Burton won't do, Mr. A.—Mr. Burton won't do, I say, — and you know it, and it is provoking of you. He is too poor: his rich cousin is the *partie*; it is he that swallows up the wealth and real respectability of the family. If we could manage Sir James Burton, now!"

"God forbid!" said Mr. Allington; "swallows them up, indeed! — Why, he drinks and he plays; — a drunkard and a sharper ——"

"Some ill-natured people do hint that he *does* sometimes drink a little more than is good for his health, and *does* play a *leetle* bit more than necessary, but I don't believe a word of it: — I won't believe ——"

"And a glutton," continued Mr. A., as if in a humour to proceed in the statement of a sum in which the unit's place was still far distant; "and a ——"

"A glutton, Mr. A.! — What can you possibly mean! — Don't you know that there

never was a time when it was so absolutely essential a quality of a gentleman to understand cookery thoroughly? — But now, dear Mr. A., I do wish you would be serious. If we could get *him*, indeed it would be something like a match. But the world has given him away already, and I fear there is nothing very likely to break it off. Well! what a lucky woman Mrs. Carleton is, to get such a marriage for her ugly daughter!”

“Ugly daughter!” said Mr. Allington.

“Decidedly ugly,” replied his wife: “as long and as pale as ——”

“Pale!” said Mr. Allington.

“Pray don’t repeat my words, sir — it is not well bred. I said pale, and I say so again. She is as pale as a sheet, except when she speaks or sings, and then she is altogether as much too red. I hate your changeable complexions and your bashful girls: just as if they had never been anywhere, and knew nobody but their own papas: I can’t abide it. We

were speaking of Mr. Burton ; — he's too poor. But we mustn't offend him neither ; for you know the title and property are on the cards still, Mr. A. Tell him Adey is much too young. Say it would be the death of me to part with her, and that you must have time to break the offer to me. Leave it so ; and then, in a year, suppose, if nothing better should turn up ——”

“ No, Mrs. Allington !” said honest John, rising : “ no — I will refuse him, if you really desire it. If, indeed, I were allowed to please myself, and, as I verily believe, Adey too, I should accept his offer directly. But, as for playing with the feelings of an honourable and frank-hearted young man, and gambling with his happiness as well as with our daughter's, it is what I will not do ; so I will go and tell him the truth, and ——”

“ Tell him what ?” shrieked Mrs. Allington, in a voice of the utmost consternation ; and then, bringing her husband back to within confidential distance of my ear — “ Tell him

nothing, Mr. A.,— dear Mr. A., if you love me, tell him nothing! Since you are determined not to be guided by my prudent tenderness for our child's best interests, do at least only refuse him; but tell him nothing. Oh, my dear Mr. A., how your indiscretion alarms me! But, now that I have got your attention for a moment, do just sit down again, and let us consult a little further as to what's to be done for our other poor dear girls. There's Maria and Julia, as well as Adey, plenty old enough and to spare. We *must* look about us."

Here there was so large a blank in the dialogue that I began to fear I should learn no more of the secrets of the family. At length Mr. Allington for once broke silence, and in a more animated key than was usual with him.

"My dear," said he, "I have been thinking over all the young men who visit here, and I do believe I have my eye on one who would be a good husband for Maria. — Guess! — He's

not far off. Of all the birds in the air, what do you say of young H——?"

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I have a particular reason, which I may explain hereafter, for not mentioning more than the initial of this very respectable name.

"I say he is a poor, pitiful fool," sharply replied the odious matron, "and that he shall have no daughter of mine. He spends on himself all he has, and only thinks how to maintain his idle profusion, instead of how to get on in the world by means of his excellent connections. He is over head in debt already, and his income is not so good by one half as he is unprincipled enough to represent it to those who, like us, Mr. A., have an interest in knowing. But still the creature has his use. He brings others, and will do no harm to the girls, for he philanders only with married women. He does not want a wife — that is to say, not a wife of his own; and, moreover, I *know* it, Mr. A., if he does like one of our

girls better than another, it is Adey, and not Maria. Take my word for that."

I said I had a particular reason for not mentioning more than the initial of this last described gentleman's name. Out upon the malicious old witch! — I, ladies and gentlemen, — I — the blushing author — am young H——. There is an English proverb touching the nature of the personal topicks which listeners are oftenest fated to hear. There is also a French one which says, that "only truth can wound." Every word this detestable woman said is true. I *do* spend more than I shall ever be able to pay. I *am* given to talk mysterious nonsense to married persons of the other sex. For I find I cannot hold my tongue; and I have, in my time, discovered that, if one talks much to a young unmarried lady (and I have not much fancy for talking to old ones), one's discourse is apt to be noted down with a degree of precision quite disagreeable by a certain married lady of great authority

in these matters — her mother. But, if ever I *could* think of sacrificing myself to matrimony, — if ever I *could* think of “altars and homes,” in any but the widely patriotick sense — if I *could* reconcile myself to give up all the thousand indulgences of celibacy — if, as Alcides did, when he married, I *could* surrender my Club — if I *could* compromise my love of Ascension turtle, and mock turtle, and of every other turtle, for that of one faithful turtle of one little happy nest — oh! how I *should* jump at that respectable way of life, shared with the pretty, and amiable, and good, and dear, Adelaide Allington.


But, albeit this is true, too true, how could that plaguy woman, her mother, have known it? For I have never breathed it to mortal. — I do not talk, that I know of, in my sleep. And if I did, how should *that* have enlightened Mrs. Allington? Adelaide herself never, but once, caught me off my guard; and I have no knowledge of Adelaide's character,

if her mother could have obtained from *her* any sanction to her surmises.

Ladies and gentlemen, I must digress. Digress, if you please, with me. If you don't like my goings on, shut me, leave me, and there's no harm done.

In honest John's own den in Allington House, there is a picture of his dear — my dear, dear Adelaide, when she was but a child. “How I do love,” says the Ettrick Shepherd (and how I do agree with him), “how I do love a well-educated little girl of twelve!” It is an age worth so much more than all other ages; — when the young heart is so entirely occupied with the warm visitings of its own innocent gladness (and at that age the tenderest heart is always the most joyous, for it has never known a stain or a sorrow). It is a merry, because a pure and honest, age, and because its affections seem to it to be immortal; death has never severed, nor unkindness blighted, one bud of their sweet stock. Alas!

that such an age should ever lose its charm,—for lose that charm it will and must. There is the presence, and the consciousness, and the love, of all good — and the absence and the ignorance of all ill. There is the fair and full promise of all that hope can paint (and hope paints well); there is the fair and full apology, (and how seldom is the apology required !) for that mystick, undisputed power, which, never claimed by the feebler sex as a right, is sure to be yielded by the other, as much from impulse as from courtesy. At that age, the features repeat, with ready truth, the blameless story of the eager mind. How modestly are the outpourings of a buoyant spirit tempered by the deepening tinge of that bashful yet dimpled cheek, and how eloquently are they pleaded for in the stealthy glance of that half-penitent, half-laughing eye ! There is nothing under the sky like the clear deep beauty of the eye which I am thinking of, unless it be the ocean when it lies calm and open to the sunshine, and



reflects only the brightness and the colours of heaven, on which it looks.

Do you understand me, ladies and gentlemen? If you do not, I pity you, all, and equally.

It was from a long, steadfast, gaze upon this picture that I was one day roused by the gentle voice of the original herself, then but a few years older, who had been sent by her father to desire my company during his ride. She had approached quite close to me before I perceived her; and probably she had already spoken unheeded. A playful but diffident look claimed identity with that recorded on the canvass; and, as her eye followed mine to what had been the cause of my abstraction, the glow on her cheek became as deep as in childhood. We were silent. I felt like a detected thief — yet why? — It was no offence; — and, if it were, surely I was before a judge who had no great reason to be severe. At length, with a sigh, she said, “Do you know, I was very happy

when that was painted? A dear friend, a very dear friend, the companion of my infancy, was drawn at the same time. They were romps, I believe, rather than sittings, and we were sorry when they ended."

"And who was your very dear friend, Adelaide?" quoth I, with an awkward prophetic anxiety.

"Our neighbour, Mr. Burton," she half whispered. — It was enough. The tone and look told me the secret of her ingenuous heart, and the hopelessness of what mine had begun to cherish; — and fie on the heart which, from that hour, could beat for her with any but a brother's love.

She put her arm within mine, and led me to her father.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, suffer me to lead you back to Mrs. Allington and the window. I was in the act of leaving my ambuscade, from very anger at the discovery which that perspicacious lady had thus made of my

best secret, and her pitiless disclosure of it to her husband, when honest John again riveted me to my chair by asking, with his wonted simplicity, the very question I longed to put.

“And how do you know all this?” said he.

“I know it,” replied his obliging partner, “I know it all beyond a doubt. For Mademoiselle questioned Mr. H.’s confidential Swiss, by my direction, about his master’s habits and fortune. Broullion affected to be diplomatick with her, but La Crepe was too much for him, and out it all came. Every one with eyes can see how it is, and I myself spent half a morning joining together some torn bits of paper which I watched him throw under the great library table, and they turned out to be some very bad verses, entitled ‘The Irresolute, addressed to A. A.’ Now don’t fly off, Mr. A.’” continued she, in a tone of soothing remonstrance, “for, now I think of it, I must have a little quarrel with you. When we were discussing my projected little pic nic last night, I

fancied you inclined to throw a little cold water upon my little scheme. Now wasn't that a leetle unkind?"

"Mrs. Allington," her husband answered gravely, "it is long since I ventured to have a voice in such matters. You may still do, as I believe you will own you have ever done, pretty much as you like, respecting your own amusements; but I must be permitted at least a remark, when I see my girls put into disadvantageous positions, and made to form indiscreet intimacies. In the first place, you must know I have no particular fondness for your pic nics, Mrs. Allington; they are generally (forgive me) apt to be composed of good, bad, and indifferent, which you will allow to be odds, my dear, of just two to one in favour of not very desirable society. (Be kind enough, my love, to hear me out.) They generally end in a romp; and I have as yet never seen any remarkable advantage accrue from the practice of romping among grown people.

(One word more, and I have done.) I think that you said your new acquaintance, Mrs. Eglantine, was to have the direction of your party."

"Well!" said Mrs. Allington, "now you have done."

"No, I haven't."

"Yes, you have; and now hear my reply. As for romping, oh, Mr. A., how often have I been obliged to tell you you know nothing at all about it, and never did; and, as for my new acquaintance, as you choose to call Mrs. Eglantine, she happens to be my very dear friend; a young, innocent, interesting, unprotected widow, whose situation is singularly romantick. A husband, whom she adored, left her, for his health, to travel in Italy. He was taken by banditti, robbed and murdered.—Poor little sufferer! she looks up to me for direction. Indeed, my chief object in giving a party at all, next to showing my own girls, is to find some amusement for that dear little woman, who

never means to take off her mourning, (how well she looks in it!) and, if she had her own way, would shut herself up for the rest of her life. She is too young to do it, Mr. A.——”

“Nor does she do it, Mrs. A. All the officers from the barracks at B. go tame about her house. There is the German colonel, Baron Oldmansogle, with the white whiskers, — and the red-headed Irish riding-master, Macgillycuddy, with the black whiskers, — and bald Lieutenant Coot, with the false whiskers, — and Cornet Macassar, with the little whisker on his under-lip, — and Cornet Rosebud, with no whiskers at all, — and there is ——”

“Poor, dear, little, injured, disconsolate creature!” whined Mrs. Allington, in interruption of the muster-roll. “Oh, Mr. A., you know not your own ingratitude; she does that merely to oblige you and me — (as for those pretty, pretty moustaches, by the way, I can only vow and protest I hope we may never have a king of this country who will have the

barbarity to cut them off, and make those dear officers look like mere Englishmen). Her house is one of the few where our girls can make a new acquaintance, and, for their sakes, she does admit these pleasing persons of a morning."

"She admits that dissipated boy of a lord of an evening," said Mr. Allington, drily.

"She does," returned the lady; "but, as you say, he is but a boy. She protects the poor young man; she sees him entering an evil world exposed to temptations; she makes him occupy his time; she gives him good advice; she gives him good books; he is safe when at Eglantine Bower. And, to tell you the honest truth (but do not compromise us), she and I think he will do for our Adey. And now you have the whole secret: I am to give a pic nic. Mrs. Eglantine will bring Lord D., and you must ask the other officers from B. barracks."

"I'll see B. barracks and all the officers at the ——"

"For shame, for shame, Mr. A.!" interrupted his helpmate.

"I'll be hanged first!" proceeded honest John, out of all patience; and his helpmate smiled and was silent; "and I'll write by this day's post to Lord D.'s guardians; and I'll tell them what I think of the widow Eglantine; and I'll speak with my dear Adey my own self," — and slap went the door.

"Stop, stop!" roared his helpmate; but her far better half was far beyond her voice, or deaf to it. "Go then," continued she, "for an old obstinate fool, with your stupid, troublesome honesty. I'm not afraid. The guardians are both abroad: France — Italy. — My pic nic; — I'll hurry it. — Sir James Burton — not married yet! — here — Adey! — Maria! — where are you? — Get some pink note-paper and blue sealing-wax directly — out of

the perfumed case, — and come to my boudoir, to write invitations.”

And so the pic nic was launched. And there's the first half of my story. I have an invincible repugnance to a long story, and therefore I have given a long dialogue, which tells the story rather more glibly than I could have done. But what remains must needs be narrated in the style called the pure historical ; heaven help me !

Now might it not be reasonable to conclude that the good man's objections were treated with a little respect in the course of the arrangements — that the widow and the young lord, at least, and perhaps a few of the officers from B. barracks, were surrendered, however reluctantly, as a peace-offering to the master of the feast ? Not a bit of it. Mrs. Allington was one of those strong-minded ladies who act on principle, and who owe it to their consciences and to themselves (and very punctual they are in those payments) to do to the full

all that their strong minds tell them ought to be done, at no matter what sacrifice of others' feelings, to mark their discountenance of opinions which they disapprove. So the invitations were sent, and accepted. Few could refuse Mrs. Allington. Mrs. Eglantine was consulted daily, hourly; Adelaide was sent backwards and forwards with hints and suggestions; and, on more than one occasion, it was voted a wonder by the widow that Miss Allington had been allowed to walk alone from Allington Park to Eglantine Bower; and so Lord D. walked back with her from Eglantine Bower to Allington Park. I saw the whole game. I watched Mrs. Allington with all the keenness of deep dislike, and vowed the discomfiture of her. My own conscience had been seared, from the moment at which I heard her confess the countless meannesses she had been guilty of, aggravated, perhaps, in my estimation, by the seduction she had practised upon the virtue of my confidential Swiss, and

by the punishment she had inflicted upon my vice of listening; and I now resolved upon setting my wits fairly against hers. Fairly, did I say? — No! By all means, fair, and the reverse. To abet in whatever could annoy and expose her; to listen and peep wherever an occasion should present itself, and even to betray her, without ruth or remorse, should it ever happen to suit my convenience. It is astonishing to one who has ever made it his amiable occupation, how short a time will acquaint one with all the whites and blacks of a vain and ambitious heart, and with the game which skilful players, who have a stake in it, may play, for their own advantage or amusement, on that chequered board. Vain and ambitious was the heart of Mrs. Allington, and a very few days' private practice enabled me to thoroughly dissect, anatomise, and lecture upon it. Thought, design, suspicion, all, all were laid bare to me, before she, in whom they rose, sunk, and rankled, was aware of even their existence.

I had little leisure to speculate upon the acts of the rest of the family, or to resolve them to their hidden motives. Yet I was angry with Adelaide. Her heart had suddenly become to me a sealed book; and, (hang it!) as is the case with many wiser men in greater affairs, I mystified myself by looking too deep for what I have since had reason to believe lay very much on the surface. She seemed to allow herself to be played upon in ways which to me, who knew her good sense, and, above all, who knew her large share of that on which all good sense is founded, good feeling, were quite unintelligible. Her good humour was impenetrable. She smiled, without distinction or measure, on all the world; even on young Lord D. But I was absolutely mad with honest John. There he sat, in his great leathern chair, with his younger children crowding round him and climbing over him, amusing himself with their babble, and seemingly deaf and blind to all the politicks of his indefatigable wife, and of Lord D.,

who flirted with his daughter before his very face, and of the widow Eglantine, who came every day to dinner. A stranger, who knew nothing about it, would have said, "How Mr. Allington does enjoy Mrs. Allington's preparations for one of her delightful pic nics!"

And, so, the day arrived on which Mrs. Allington was to make her grand display of hospitality, taste, and daughters. The morning was fine, "the day unclouded, the earth all verdure, and the sky all song," as Sir Namby Pamby improvised, who had occupied himself through a whole wet St. Swithin's in composing this delicious sentence. In short, "had Mrs. Allington selected it out of all the days of the year," as old Mrs. Emery laboured to tell her, (whose trade it was to brighten all things,) "she could not have made a more favourable choice." The same laudatory lady was heard to declare — "That Mrs. Allington was the most fortunate of women; not only in having the finest days for her parties (although that

alone was a great blessing), but in every thing. She had the best and easiest husband in the world, and nobody's daughters were so popular; she was sure to get rid of them. All she undertook succeeded to her utmost wish. Who but Mrs. Allington, in that scanty neighbourhood, could have assembled so many people? and such good society too! All B. barracks! and, besides Mr. Wortly the great brewer, and Sir Twaddly Maresnest, the colonial judge, she had herself counted at one time five baronets, and two lords, young Lord D. and old Lord E.!"


Mrs. Allington was indeed a lady eminently qualified to give effect to the social principle. Happiness, according to Byron, was born a twin. Happiness, according to Mrs. Allington, lives in an Omnibus.

The festivities began with an excursion to a very romantick spot, only four miles from Allington Park. Here an old ivied castle lingered in the last, the longest, and most

picturesque stage of its being, repaying with its beautiful frowns the lady of Allington, who had not failed, by judicious props and repairs, to stay the dilapidations of time and wintry weather among her favourite ruins. A low rough range, of modern growth, nestled under its walls. This was built, in good unobtrusive taste, out of fragments of the fallen parts, and, clinging like a faithful nursling to the ancient pile, served to buttress with its kindred strength the shelter of the parental roof. It formed two rooms. One spacious enough for a large party to dine in. The other a sort of boudoir. (I cannot tell what that was fit for; there was scarcely room for more than two persons.) A lawn of fine turf was kept short and smooth as velvet for dancing; and, at a small distance, concealed by an intervening wood, was a farm-house, which afforded cantonments and picketings for grooms and horses.

The company had been invited to meet at

the ruins by two o'clock, there to open the solemnities with a sort of a meal, which is on the cards of fashionable people expressed by four emphatick French words, signifying that one is expected to eat not with one's fingers only. "War to the knife!" was the memorable exclamation of the defenders of Saragossa: "Breakfast to the fork!" was the no less determined proposal of Mrs. Allington. Each lady had provided, as directed, one cold dish; each gentleman two bottles of wine. Intemperately proportioned feast! Of course all the usual calamities happened, were lamented, and straightway subsided into jest. There was a remarkable preponderance of pigeon pies; hams were seen, a scarcely less stupendous assemblage, pointing at each other through their paper ruffles, from one end to the other of the table. "Every leaf had a tongue," (as a living poet says); and there was a "beggarly account" (as an immortal one says) of counter-vailing chickens. Salad, salt, and bread, had



been forgotten; and all the wine was champagne. But Mrs. Allington had thought of every thing. Deficiencies were allowed to appear only as long as they were voted a good joke, and presently all were repaired from an unexpected depôt at the farm; and honest John's wines had as good a flavour, and were in as great variety and plenty, amongst the ruins as at his own hospitable board at Allington Park.

While Mrs. Allington was playing the "most kind hostess" to all, all were variously engaged. Many in their own little businesses; more on the little businesses of others. Some speculating on the largest and solemnest considerations of county politicks; many making matches for their neighbours; some few making matches for themselves. While, at a side table, and happy in their convivial seclusion, sat the colonial judge, with Mr. Docet the tutor, and Mr. Proseit the curate, making common cause in a reversionary pigeon pie, with the next presentation of a peregraux in prospect, and an actual

incumbency over three long-necked bottles, which stood, unnoticed of the multitude, in a corner. Not far off, Doctor Shudderpool, M.D., smit with the horrid mysteries of the Regent Street Solar Microscope, and solicitous equally for the general health and for his own, was occupied in passing through a process of purification the water of a beauteous spring which bubbled by, and which came improved from Mr. George Robins' smallest-sized patent royal filter, which costs but 1*l.* 5*s.*, and "renders crystal the worst water, at the rate of twelve gallons per day."* Of the other sex, crouching in an ivied window, and single, as she long had lived, sat Lady Venena Adderly, compounding pencil notes for a descriptive letter to poet Peeper, who furnished lampoons to a Sunday paper, which, in all well-regulated families, is read before morning church. "Memoranda of some of the *voted pretty persons.* —

* See Advertisement.

The three Miss S——s, crooked in three different ways (deformity voted a *petite figure*). Miss W. a beard (voted a *duvet* or *shade*). And little red Miss T. (voted *auburn, and like Jane Shore*) runs about chattering like a magpie that has finished its education in the back yard of an ill-managed boarding-school. Mem. of some of the *undeniably interesting*. If a little lady of unquestionable beauty and accomplishments *will* submit to an invitation to leave her husband's gouty room to adorn a pic nic, certainly not a hundred miles from it, and *must* console herself, in the absence of the sufferer, by talking over his bad symptoms with his particular friend, we would recommend the parties not to *trust to Italian*; and to remember that others may be acquainted with the languages of *the Continent*. We give this hint in the most purely friendly spirit. We never stain the pages of this journal, like some of our contemporaries, with allusions of a more particular sort, which might give pain to re-

spectable persons, and offend the general reader." Thus wrote this detestable woman; for, in my character of overlooker as well as overhearer, I stood behind the window at which she drove her abominable trade.

But let us turn to happier parts of the scene. Eating, drinking, laughing, syllabubing under the cow, and dancing, occupied the time till dusk. Then the whole party adjourned to Allington Park, to spend the evening and beguile the night, amidst the varied charms of tea, musick, supper, more dancing, fireworks, and moon-lit rambles.

Then began Miss Creak (whom her mamma was with difficulty prevailed on to allow to sing before strangers, though she had brought a whole opera in her carriage seat for fear of accidents,) to go through a *scena*, the part of Proserpina to Sir Wheezely Croker's Pluto, who sat on the grass apologising for a cold. (*She.*) "Aspetto." (*He.*) "Diletto." (*She.*) "Mio bene." (*He.*) "Le Pene." All, so far,

went very successfully; and she went up well to "eterno," and he down to "inferno." But when they came to (*Duetto*) "i sguardi d'Amore,— i dardi nel cuore,—l'orrore," it was first discovered that neither was accustomed to a second, both complained of the want of an instrument, and each had a different opinion as to which had put the other out of tune and time.

But you, Mrs. Allington, you were a prosperous gentlewoman! Every thing went on according to your fondest wish. The realities of the present hour, the prospects of an indistinct future, all, all were of the rosiest rose-colour. At the dawn of this auspicious day your looks had commerced with the opening uncertain sky. Hope was then balanced by fear on your careful brow. But, when you had thought and rethought, reviewed your mines, and in fancy baffled the countermines of the foe, and with wondrous skill had placed and ordered every thing and every body to


your own liking, then, in your meridian joy, did there seem a rivalry between the broad sun and your expanded countenance, which should shine the brighter, and spread the greater gladness around.

And Mrs. Eglantine took possession of old Lord E., and gave her chapronage to Adelaide and young Lord D. Miss Carleton, whose marriage was fixed for the following day, sent an excuse; but she sent it by the hands of her intended, Sir James Burton, who was never known to absent himself from an occasion of good eating and drinking. It is important to mention, as it was much remarked upon, that, whether out of civility to the hostess, or out of pure carelessness, or for some other reason, — and many were the probable reasons that underwent discussion, — Sir James Burton *did* actually offer, and some *did* say with a significant look, his arm for the day to Miss Maria Allington.

The concerns of the rest of the company

were soon arranged, and apparently to general satisfaction; for the majority were pleased, and who ever cared for the feelings of a minority? Who had leisure to attend to the history of a pouting, quivering lip, or an anxious wandering eye? I was one, probably of the very few, sufficiently disengaged to admit the consciousness that such things were. There is a forward communicativeness in Joy which ever makes it seen.—It is at once known by its mien from every thing but what it is; it looks around for sharers, and (thank Heaven!) seldom looks in vain; while Disappointment hangs back from the crowd, is doomed often to be mistaken for moroseness or for petulance, and never to find a willing sympathy. In the rear of even this merry party there were looks, and I saw them, which bore no testimony to Mrs. Emery's repeated declaration, that "every creature there *must* be pleased and satisfied." Alas! this was not assented to by the poor, timid, mortified girl, who, in her desertedness,

sees one, whom she expected (perhaps very tenderly wished) to be her partner, laughing, shrieking, and whisking, with another; while deep and cankering envy of the blue-bodiced rival who has displaced her, and perhaps as deep resentment against Mrs. Allington for the thwarting officiousness of an ill-timed introduction, now first found entrance into her hitherto peaceful bosom.—Ay, now for the first time. But who shall say that the malignant passions of such a day will cease with the exciting cause? And who shall say that the home of that pensive husband will ever again shine upon him as it did before, (sad man!) with nods, and winks, and becks, he dissented from the proposal of his pretty vain wife, to take a seat in that phaeton to Allington Park! Of small account were nods, and winks, and becks, when weighed against such considerations as a phaeton, a bearded captain, and his wild horses, acting on a mind already heated with waltzing and champagne. And who will assert that old



Mr. Creeper, whom a rheumatick gout had imprisoned at home, really felt the obligations he expressed to Mr. H. of the Priory, for his special care of little Mrs. Creeper, who was never known to take care of herself? And small comfort was it to him that Mrs. H. of the Priory, in a fit of what might be mistaken for jealousy, bestowed her company, and all the smiles she could summon, upon that dissipated wretch, Mr. G. of the Deanery.

But let us leave the melancholy minority. *Retournons à nos moutons.*—“Look at that dear interesting creature! Look at Mrs. Eglantine,” said our hostess. “How lovely she is! Whose appearance but hers could stand it in that deep, deep mourning? How kindly she forces her spirits and strength to aid to make our little *projet* agreeable! I never can be sufficiently grateful!” Mrs. Eglantine did indeed seem to justify these praises, and merit this gratitude. There she sat, in weeds; weeds of grace, indeed! And who, if that were

mourning, could ever regret to see the loveliest of that sex in the garb of grief? it looked so like joy. Sweet is the weeping willow, when all its long graceful leaves are laughing and dancing in the brisk and buxom breeze, and, in their turn, stooping to sweep into dimples the river that flows by. Sweet the sunbeam that glimmers and sports through the glades of the cypress grove; and sweet the window of the privileged Jarrin *, where, during the hours of divine service, or the season of a more general mourning than that of Mrs. Eglantine, be-

* To whom is the shop of Jarrin, prince of confectioners, New Bond Street, and to whom are the comely dimensions of Madame Jarrin, at whom a man once fired a pistol, through pure love and a pane of glass, unknown? Of all the confectionary wonders ever presented to the eye, the most admirable ever seen was that which attracted crowds to Jarrin's window all last winter. A billowy sea of sugar, which it scared the stoutest heart to look upon, and a boat, and a lighthouse, and a rock, whereupon stood "the noblest work of God, an honest man," rather larger than the lighthouse, which I suppose was right, but much larger than the boat that brought him there, which I think was wrong.

tween the half-closed shutters, symbols at once of interdicted traffick, or of decent woe, is seen the wonted display of gewgaws and of sweets — the confectionary, the flowers, the alabaster, the mirror, and the plateau. So the Widow; for, here and there, through a smiling crevice of the sober black, might yet be spied the lurking locket and the glittering gem, memorials, haply, of him she mourns, but yet which, blending in kindest union with some recent tribute from the hand of living friendship, say, or seem to say, that bosom is not yet a desert in the midst of a world which its mistress is born to enjoy and to adorn.

There she sat, “as ladies wish to be who love their lords,” placed between two of them, and ministering to each with a pretty equal grace; although I fancied I could read a meaning in the glance she, not rarely, cast upon the younger of the two, amid his attentions to her inseparable Adelaide Allington.

Mrs. Eglantine (I borrow the eloquent words

of her friend, Sir Namby Pamby,) "is one of those sensitive beings, the children of impulse, unable to controul her sympathies, and varying ever under the varying influences of gleam and shadow." She complains of weak health and uncertain spirits. She describes to you her griefs, and she describes to you her medicines; neither of them of the vulgar sort. Her all is in the tomb, or, rather worse, out of the tomb; for it lies murdered and a-bleaching in the Pyrenees. But she *must* do her duty to society; for Mrs. Allington (and who knows and feels these things better?) says so, and tells her she must not bury herself in her loved retirement. Mrs. A. hopes indeed to see her make a second choice; but that is impossible, absolutely impossible. Mrs. Eglantine fulfils, therefore, a generous, painful task to the publick, and permits herself to be led forth before it. She begins the day, languid, and lounging, plaintive, and platonick. As it advances, her spirits improve. By dinner time she assumes

the attractive, retaining still much of the abstracted, the inconsequent, and the simple. But, during that exhilarating season, her reserve subsides, and she becomes very agreeable, and loves her neighbour. After dinner she is exceedingly confidential, and, from that time, she frankly takes her part in whatever may be the amusement of the evening.

“ There is nae white but hath its black ;” and this even Mrs. Allington was doomed to find. Her pic nic was tending to its close — her schemes all promising to take effect — when something, one of the few things over which she had no controul, came to damp the general joy. The time for the fireworks had arrived. They were displayed, at a distance from the house, on the opposite bank of a fine piece of water. Fireworks never show so well as when, repeated in that element, they “ float double,” as the poet says, “ squib and shadow.” Water is the real place, where, according to the suggested Eton inscription, the pyrotech-

nist's "own fireworks are excelled."* But another and a greater motive occupied the ample bosom of the hostess, and directed her in the choice of this spot. To this motive Mrs. Eglantine was party; and so indeed was I. By much listening and prying I had discovered, and had in vain tried my best to circumvent, it. It was agreed between Mrs. Allington and her friend that the latter should arrange matters with Lord D. for his elopement with Adelaide. And now, as I heard it whispered, the travelling chaise and four was waiting at the park gate nearest to the lake. The fond and careful

* A firework-maker's widow at Eton applied to the captain of the school, the late Mr. —, to be good enough to furnish her with an epitaph for her defunct husband. He undertook it. "One of the neatest and most touching epitaphs, to my fancy, in our language," said he, "is that upon the monument of Purcell, the musical composer, in Westminster Abbey: 'He is gone to that place where only his own harmony can be excelled.' Now, what do you think of adopting that inscription (and you cannot have a better), with merely this necessary alteration — 'He is gone to that place where only his own fireworks can be excelled?'"

mother was but to shut her eyes, and leave all to the widow. The other parent was supposed to be sufficiently secured, by his ignorance of the plot, and by the habitual unenquiring indolence of his nature. But, whether from hatred of Mrs. Allington, or from jealousy of Adelaide, or from a real good and upright feeling towards honest John, I know not; this I know, that I had not failed to open his eyes and rouse his mind to all that was going on. And what got I for it? Thanks? Yes, thanks, after a fashion; but absolutely nothing more. Honest John seemed scarce to hear me; and, when urged to comprehend the whole extent and force of the information, little seemed it to interest him. Was it then possible he could indeed countenance by his criminal neglect so disgraceful a proceeding?

The exhibition had begun. The first few bars of "God save the king" (imposing overture! which, much to the credit of our loyalty, is always appropriate on every occasion of pub-

lick rejoicing, from the election of a churchwarden upwards,) sounded from the full band of B. barracks; and, already, among the shouts of the peasantry, the first rockets rushed upward to the sky. But they were the signals only of disappointment. The night had become unusually dark, the air unusually still and sultry. By short-sighted and sanguine mortals the latter circumstance had been hailed as one of comfort to the spectators; the former as favourable to the effect of what they were soon to be dazzled withal. But, after a vivid flash or two of sheeted lightning, which embraced and shamed all that man could do in the way of coruscation, the thunder began to growl, and large heavy drops were now heard to plash upon the calm, blackened water. And, scarcely had the band, surmounting its second stanza, begun to give effect to the prayer of the third, "On him be pleased to pour, long may he reign," when rain it did in right earnest; and it soon poured.

All thoughts were turned, instantly and eagerly, towards the house. But fear misleads judgment, and the greater part of the company hurried in directions wide of that which led to shelter. Mrs. Allington was standing in her Gothick porch, distributing umbrellas, shawls, and cloaks, to go she knew not whither; and long was it ere she was joined by more than a very inconsiderable number of her friends. Nor was her solicitude for the general welfare more remarkable than her entire disinterestedness touching the fate of her husband and daughter. Not once did the name of honest John escape those lips which once had vowed to him so much of cherishing and of obedience; and, when not a few friends offered to search for the general favourite, Adelaide, their services were declined by the mother, with an assurance that Adelaide was quite safe; that Maria was comfortable in a summer-house with Sir James Burton, and Julia snug under a tree with several young men, who would of course

take care of her. In the general need, sundry and various were the destinies of each; and tedious it were to recount them. Suffice it to say, that the Reverend Mr. Proseit, and his friend, the Colonial Jurist, faithful now in their partnership of water, as before of wine, were seen, together still, slowly returning, midway of the lawn, disdaining the pudder o'er their heads, each imprisoning, with tenacious gripe, a button of the other, as in act of argument he enforced, with the protruded finger of the other hand, his still unfinished syllogism. That of the jurist had the advantage. It was an arithmetical one; to show that an increased mortality was no grievance. "Thus to be proved," said Mr. Maresnest. — "The average mortality of any place is no grievance. D'ye grant me that?" "Granted," said the Reverend Mr. Proseit; — "but then," continued he, "to qualify that admission ——" "Suffer me to proceed, good Sir," interrupted the man of Colonial law. "Admitted, the average mortality

no grievance: call then the average mortality per ann. one hundred — amount of grievance nought. Thus; — one hundred, equal to nought. (I wish I had a pencil.)” “I wish you had,” replied the divine; “for you would then release the third button of my coat, which, allow me to say, is not very strongly attached to the cloth. They have a way, Mr. Maresnest, the tailors have, of whipping on their buttons in so careless a manner as to ——” “Let me go on,” again interrupted he of the transatlantick judgment-seat: “ $100=0$. Now, double the mortality, and double the grievance — $0 \times 2=0$ still; — quadruple it — $0 \times 4=0$ still; — and so on, *ad infinitum*, leaving the sum total of grievance still as 0. — I do not see the fallacy.”

Lady Venena, alone, and shunned of all, was providing singly for the refuge of that hated self in whose comfort none but self bore any interest; and Mr. Docet, the tutor, mindful of classick precedent, had fled, like another Æneas,

“as Love or Fortune guides,”

with the elderly Miss Di Doleman, to the inviting shelter of Dripstone Cave.

At last, the storm subsided, and the victims began to arrive, wet to the skin, and draggled with dirt. But that was now past all help. And, if hot blankets, dry clothes, negus, and punch, had any restorative virtue, every restorative was there, and in plenty. Then began enquiries concerning absentees. Then did Mrs. Emery, *maugre* Mrs. Allington's considerate efforts to stop her, lest she should needlessly alarm fond parents by proclaiming who was missing, insist on calling over the muster-roll. All, save three, answered to their names. These three were Adelaide, Mrs. Eglantine, and young Lord D.

Every eye turned to Mrs. Allington — every tongue conjured her not to be uneasy. But she, "mistress of their passions and her own," was perfectly at ease, and retaliated their entreaties to her to be composed, with a corresponding command to them to think nothing at all about it: "Lord D. was so good-natured;

he would take care of her dear child, who was as safe as with her. — And was not Mrs. Eglantine there?" She even proposed that the dancing should recommence, if it were only to remove all chance of chill from the rain. The musick was summoned into the hall for the young ones, and more shawls and more negus for the chaperons. But it would not do. The effort to renew the festivities was vain. No Adelaide appeared, and no Lord D.; and, what seemed really to surprise and annoy Mrs. Allington, no Mrs. Eglantine. "She must be gone home to the Bower," said Mrs. Allington; "and she has taken her companions with her. Her judgment is so correct, I cannot be uneasy."

Morning dawned. All were tired, and glad to get home. So all departed, kindly hoping that nothing fatal had happened; and several, in their solicitude, suggesting for consideration well authenticated histories of death by light-

ning. It was clear that Mrs. Allington had her own springs of comfort in her own strong mind. How she slept I know not; but slumber was a stranger to me. The more I reflected on what I had seen, the more was I astonished at the conduct of each of the parties concerned. I was at a loss which most to admire: the daring reach of the mother's ambition — the criminal supineness of the father — the heartless vapidity and inconstancy of the daughter—or the officious interference of the female friend, for mere mischief's sake. I was, however, so thoroughly out of temper with all things and persons, that I felt ill prepared for the scene of deep dissimulation which awaited me at the family breakfast. So I walked out, early, and alone, to indulge myself in bad humour and useless meditation.

I returned about the middle of the day. More wonders: Mrs. Allington was in fits. Her younger daughters ministering salts and sympathies. Adelaide, on both knees, smiling,

weeping, blushing, and begging pardon and a blessing, all together. Accompanied she was, and supported, by a husband — not Lord D., but the playmate of her infancy, and the lover of her choice, Tom Burton.

And all was soon explained. Honest John had known a trick worth two at least of his wife's. He had received her peremptory orders to shut his eyes to the elopement of his daughter. He had done more — he had abetted in it. He had played the practical diplomatist. He had procured a licence, and had given his formal consent to the two parties the most interested, that the marriage should be solemnised privately, but very thoroughly, that morning in his own parish church. Adelaide, on the preceding night, had only appeared to elope. She had, indeed, left the house with Lord D. and the widow, but had returned alone, before the storm, and had taken refuge in her father's study, where she remained, alone with her

father, till the canonical hours of the morning enabled him to give away to his young friend and neighbour a hand almost as dear to the giver as to the receiver.

Poor Mrs. Allington ! On the same morning, but a few hours later, another marriage was performed in the same church — Sir James Burton's with Miss Carleton. Still later in that eventful day, news of Mrs. Eglantine reached her dear friend at Allington Park. She and young Lord D. were far on their road to Scotland. Poor Mrs. Allington !—her fits returned. “ Well, who would have thought it ! Oh ! never, never was I so deceived in woman ! And yet, somehow, I always saw *that* in her which made me think it prudent not to repose too much confidence in her—the artful, unprincipled, poor, despicable creature ! ” And then, so sincerely did Mrs. Allington pity the poor, despicable creature, that she stamped and burst into a passion of tears.

But Mrs. Allington was not wholly unfor-

tunate. She *had* a little feeling of gratified vengeance to enjoy. After the first transports of her mortification were past, she had the merit of subduing her anger sufficiently to write some good news, and she was the first to communicate it to her dear sensitive friend. Very late on the evening of that same day, a most unexpected visitor arrived at Eglantine Bower, the report of whose arrival spread like wildfire through the neighbourhood — Mr. Eglantine of that ilk; — the supposed defunct, happily restored, lord of that bower; — never having been murdered at all, only detained, and a little the worse for a few wounds and other slight severities, from which, with a few months' assiduous nursing, there was every prospect of an entire recovery, and a long life. There, in the midst of his own bower, he sat him down, awaiting, with commendable patience, and, as the civilians have it, *in animo maritali*, the return of his lady from her premature and

now unprofitable journey to the connubial border of North Britain.

And Mrs. Allington has not given a pic nic since.

G.



THE
DOLE OF TICHBORNE.

THE house and estate of De Ichenbourne, or Tichborne, in Hampshire, has belonged to the ancient family of the same name from times anterior to the Norman Conquest. A tradition has descended with it, from generation to generation, which will, doubtless, be considered as deriving confirmation from the following Metrical Legend. There are some peculiarities in the style and versification of this precious Ballad, which might refer it to an age as remote as that of the earliest specimens preserved in Bishop Percy's and Mr. Evans's Collections; but certain events alluded to in the latter stanzas render the date of the composition doubtful and obscure. The original paper, in which the MS. of the Ballad was folded, contains the following notice:

" Yn y^e raigne of y^e wys & uertuous Prins Henrye II. did y^e Ladye of Tichborne, beinge thenne onn her dethbedde, praye her Lorde to graunte in ppetuitie for y^e poore, soe muche lande as shee might crawle rounde, hauinge yn her hande a brande, newlye from y^e burninge onn y^e herth; alsoe, y^t he wolde establyshe a Dole of Bredd, in y^e pporcion of xxvj. onces to eache poore pson cominge for y^t charytie onn a certaine daye once yn eache yeare for euer. Thenn dydd that dyinge Ladye, to y^e noe smal admiracyon of alle p^rsent, crawle rounde a large & fayre space of Lande, whyche was thenne forthwyth appropriated accordinglye. Nor dydd shee, yn y^t her extremitye, fayle to playe y^e prophetesse, sayinge y^t, wheneuer y^e condicion sholde noe longere bee fullfilled yn y^t sorte, the direct descente genealogicall sholde cease to be contynuede by heyres male of y^t worshippfull stocke."

In late times, the hereditary hospitality and benevolence of that family, which have descended unimpaired to its present representatives, have been exercised in other ways, and the Dole has been discontinued.

It may be said of this, as it was of another ancient and honourable family, that of Vere, "It rose in Valour, and in Beauty set."

THE DOLE OF TICHBORNE.

I.

“ Come vowe mee a vowe, my owne trewe Lorde,”
The olde Ladye of Tichborne sayd,
“ Come pledg mee the fayth of thy trustye worde,
“ As I lye onn my dyinge bedd.

II.

“ And soe shal my dere soule bettere spede,
“ Yf, for Charytie’s sweete sake,
“ For aye, as the hongrye straunger’s mede,
“ A free gyfte thou woldest make.”

III.

“ Nowe passe thee in peace, my owne dere wyfe,”
The weepinge Knyghte replied,
“ Nor shal ytt bee sayd, wyth thy partynge lyfe,
“ That thys boone ytt was denyed.

IV.

“ And I wyl graunte thy partinge prayer,
“ Betyde ytt whate’er maye bee,
“ Wer ytt e’en to the halfe of my londes fayre,
“ For thys dede of Charytie.”

V.

Then loffed loude thatt auntyent crone
Onn her dethbedd as shee dydd lye ;
And marvayled her maydens evreych one,
For shee loffed righte merilye.

VI.

And thus to the Leech by her bedd syde
Shee sayd, “ What thynkest thou ?
“ Howe farre moght I raunge o’er thes londes wyde ?
“ Speke oute, Maystere Doctoure, nowe.

VII.

“ Smal thoght hadd I, yn thys payne and wo,
“ To raunge o’er the feeldes agen ;
“ Bott fayne wolde I learne howe farre I colde goe :
“ Speke oute, Maystere Doctoure, thenn.”

VIII.

Thenn oute bespake thatt Doctoure wight,
For a lerned Leech was hee,
“ Nowe, ere thatt thou dye, yf I rede aright,
“ Mee thinkes thou mayest crawle steppes three.

IX.

“ For a bedd rydden woman thou longe hast byn,
“ And thou touchest neere thyne ende :
“ Soe thinke onn heven, and close thyne eyn,
“ And lett Syr Preeste attende.”

X.

Thenn loffed agen thatt dyinge crone,
And, “ Lyst, my trewe Lorde;” sayd shee!
“ The Leech speketh wel, bott nowe to my boone
“ Once agen give eare, and to mee.

XI.

“ Thou seest yonn brande, howe yt burneth fayre
“ On the herth wher ytt doth lye :
“ ’Twolde quicklye quenche yn the stormye ayre,
“ And soe in dede sholde I : —

XII.

“ Yett nowe wyl I crawle onn my dyinge joynte,
“ Wyth thys olde sponke yn my honde;
“ And, as farre as I crawle from poynte to poynte,
“ Thou shalt gyve mee of thy londe.

XIII.

“ Whylst thys brande and I shal eache a sparke
“ Of livinge fyre keepe yn,
“ Soe moch of thy londe, I praye thee marke,
“ Of thy free worde I shal wynn.

XIV.

“ And thatt londe shal for aye a dole afforde,
“ Att thys gate, to the hongrye poore.”
Thenn doubted moch her owne trewe Lorde,
Of her wyttes hee felt nott sure.

XV.

She tooke the brande yn her wytherede fyst,
As shee crawled onn her knee;
And her Lorde was sadd; for, crawle wher shee lyst,
Shee must have ytt for her fee.

XVI.

Shee crawled South, and shee crawled West,
North and Este shee crawled alsoe ;
And the lustyest sayd, whoe colde walke the best,
Such a crawle wolde worke themm woe.

XVII.

And shee crawled and crawled, and the Knyghte in
For hys londs groned ful sore, [payne
To thynke howe lyttel to hym moght remayne,
Yf shee crawled bott a lyttel more.

XVIII.

And bryghter and bryghter burned the brande,
And more stoutlye crawled the crone ;
And shee crawled rounde fourscore roode of lande,
Tyll shee reached an olde graye stone :

XIX.

“ And thys,” cryed shee, “ shal the boundarye bee,
“ For I wis my brande and breth
“ Now waxen shorte, bott thys charytie
“ Shal remembere yee of my deth :

XX.

“ And eache poore knave, thatt shal after crave
“ For the Dole at Tichborne dore,
“ One lofe of wheaten bredd shal have
“ Of six onces and a score.

XXI.


“ And thys I charge, for the good of my soule,
“ On soch heires as maye after bee
“ Of thys fayre howse, that thys blessed dole
“ They shal gyve contynualye.

XXII.

“ And to thys sure hanne, for my dere soule’s peace,
“ Thys howse and yt’s Lordes I condemne,
“ *When yt’s heires thys dole of bredd shall cease,*
“ *Noe heires shal be bredd to themm.*

XXIII.

“ Yett of doghteres fayre ther shal bee good store,
“ Kynde and lovelye to see ;
“ And aye, as the sonnes waxe fewer, the more
“ And the lovelyer the doghteres shal bee.”



XXIV.

Thenn she threwe the brande in the streamlett nere,
 Ful twentye roode her fro,
 And the streamlett dydd hisse, as yt's waters clere
 Wyth thatt olde sponke awaye dydd flowe.

XXV.

And downe the streamlett, thatt lyvelonge daye,
 Was thatt olde sponke seene to sayle;
 And the lyttel troutes swom ful faste awaye,
 For yt burned themm yn the tayle.

XXVI.

“ Nowe our liege Kynge Henrye, of thatt high name
 “ The seconde, good lucke betyde,
 “ And Ave Marie, bonne grace Notre Dame,”—
 The olde crone sayd, and dyed.

XXVII.

Yeeres rowled theyr course, and * *
 * * * * * *
 * * * * * *

(Here the MS. is illegible for 150 stanzas.)

CLXXVIII.

And theye rose yn honoure, yn armes they strove,
 And some tyme yn scathe wer tryed,
 Whenn for Holye Churche, and for faythfull love,
 The galante Chedioke * dyed.

CLXXIX.

And whenn civile warres theyre myschef drave,
 Bloudye and sadde to see,
 One Tichborne† to the common weale clave,
 And one, (for hys owne,) clombe a tree.

* Mr. D'Israeli, in his "Curiosities of Literature," gives the story of the young and gallant Chedioke Tichborne, who met his severe fate by engaging himself in Babbington's Conspiracy, thereto led by religious zeal, further inflamed by a romantick love for Mary Queen of Scots.

† In the civil wars of Charles the First, Colonel Robert Tichborne, Alderman of London, took part with the Parliament, and sat on the King's trial, and signed the warrant for execution. He was author of a very commendable work, entitled, "Clusters of Canaan's Grapes helped to the Press, that they may be Wine for common Drinking." See Caryl. — His cousin, Sir Richard Tichborne, was of the opposite party; and, after the defeat of



CLXXX.

And one dydd cutte offe hys Sovereigne's hedd,

(Hys cozen and hee wer foes,)

And the othere noe wronge wolde have thoghte, yn
ytt's stedd,

To have cutte offe the hedd of hys coz.

CLXXXI.

Yeeres rowled theyr course, and * *

* * * * *

*(Here the MS. is again imperfect for 40 stanzas, in the
course of which a period of probably rather more than
a century and a half elapses, but only these two lines
are legible :)*

And the Knyghte grewe sorelye sycke of the Dole,

Soe ytt ceased ryghte dolefullye.

* * * * *

the King's troops at the battle of Cheriton Down, in which he
had bravely fought, took refuge in an oak tree from his pursuers.

CCXXI.

And fyrst ther came a fayre-hayred chylde,
Ytt wolde nott bee borne a sonne;
'Twas alle too beautyfulle and mylde,
And ytt sayd ytt wolde bee a nonne.*

CCXXII.

Thenn, meete yn dede to bee her sistere,
Yn beautye and grace, ytt felle
Thatt Fannie was borne: ytt was lykwyse clere
Thatt shee was a damoselle.

CCXXIII.

Thenn Julia, to whose bryghte tresses shene
Dimme wer the virgine gould;
And no marbel of Greece was ever seene
Lyke the skynne over whych theye rowled.

* Tradition says that this determination was reconsidered by this fair person, much to the happiness of the noble representative of a house nearly as ancient as her own, to whom she was afterwards united.

CCXXIV.

Good Lorde ! and those lesser buddes, fayre store,
Of thys lovelye stocke thatt grewe !
But alle, alack, lyke the three afore,
Resolved to bee gyrles too !

CCXXV.

And theye clave, lyke theyr faders of that olde halle,
To the fayth of auncyente Rome ;
Bee ware, bee ware, yee heretykes alle ;
Of the flames theye maye lyghte for your doome !

CCXXVI.

And nowe the mysterye oute has creppt,
Why thys banne the olde crone layd ;
'Tis trewe thatt the Dole hath nott byn keppt,
Bott ytt's vertue hathe nott decayed.

CCXXVII.

For shee, yn her greife and heavynesse,
Leste the Dole sholde fayle, yn ytt's place,
Resolved no lesse the land to blesse
Wyth beautye, goodnesse, and grace.

CCXXVIII.

Thenn, whoever shal comme to thatt mansyonne fayre,
Remembere Tichborne Dole;
Gyve thanks for the lovelye Ladyes there,
And praye for the Olde Crone's soule.

G.

A NOTION OF CONVENIENCE;

WITH

OTHER SOLECISMS IN LANGUAGE.

How often does an unexpected dun, who has gained admission to the presence under the vile pretence of "some little general business," and the specious sanction of an unremembered name, and a better blue frock and grey mixture trousers than one's own, — how often, I say, does such a man desire, and not without a hint of action at law, that his "small account," (three long, narrow rolls of arithmetical addition, adorned at the beginning with the gorgeous blazon of the English monarchy, and disfigured at the end with an

unquestionable sum total equal to the half of one's yearly income,) shall be settled at one's earliest "convenience" in the course of the present week!

"I'm of opinion that gay fellow is sitting a mighty deal too convenient to my blood-cousin jarmin, Miss Theodosia," said an Irish gentleman of distinguished extraction.

"Convenience" was scarcely the right expression here. For who would have thought, from the wording of this observation, that the very pretty person who was in this formidable degree of consanguinity to the Irish gentleman of distinguished extraction, was actually doing all she could to edge away her chair from the close persecution of a minor poet—

"A wretch who had within him undivulged rhymes,
"Unwhipp'd of justice —"

and who was then in the very fact of urging upon her an epigram of sixteen lines of his own making?

During the siege of —, in the year 18—, the French were endeavouring to throw up a work behind the ruins of a dismantled house on the other side of a broad river, and directly opposite to an English battery, within the extreme distance at which it is practicable to carry on an unfriendly conversation by means of thirteen-inch shells.

For several weeks this conversation was carried on entirely on the English side. Two large mortars were in the battery, so adjusted by painted lines to give the due aim, and by the sextant to give the due elevation, that, with a proper charge of powder, every shell which was fired from each was sure to fall just behind the tenement in the possession of the French, and in the very centre of where it was known that the workmen were carrying on their impeded operations.

Regularly, therefore, at intervals of about ten minutes, but with sufficient variation of time to render the compliment always un-

expected, did the two English mortars keep up their alternate fire, night and day, to prevent the continuance of the work.

This occupation, which was matter of tedious and unvaried duty to the gunners, it became matter of amusement to the idlers of the army to visit.

Eugenio was an idler. He was on the staff; and often, with other young gentlemen who consider it unfit to obtrude themselves by too constant personal attendance on the commander in chief during his hours of severe meditation in quarters, would he steal forth to this battery, to watch with his glass the movements on the enemy's outposts, and now and then to give his advice touching the pointing of a gun, or such other urgent matters of the war.

"What can that fellow be doing on the top of the wall there?" said Eugenio, with his eye at the glass. "Methinks he is looking at us rather audaciously," continued he, turning to

the Irish sergeant of artillery: "it would be for the honour of the service to give him a hint to be off. What do you think of giving him a shell? It's seven minutes since No. 2. was fired. It's almost time again with No. 1."

"It's my opinion we ought to have him out of that," said the Irish artillery sergeant.

"Come, tackle to, my lads, and get ready," was the word; and the men tackled to in right earnest, for the practical joke of frightening a French idler from a post which he had assumed with probably no better reason for doing so than the English idler had for observing him.


A practical joke is always the best of jokes, if one may judge of its quality by the alacrity with which it is undertaken, and by the applause with which it is always received by every party concerned, except the one at whose expense it takes place. — And the butt is a party who never can estimate fairly the merits of any joke.

To adjust the heavy engine to its bed, so that

every mark should fit its fellow — to drive in each choque, till the elevation was just and true — to charge the yawning jaws of the gun, and to deposit the cumbrous shell within its chamber, was the work of but a few moments ; and, tickled by the match, the whole machine bellowed forth the jest to the heavens.

Every eye watched the round black ball as it took its curving course through the sky — watched by every eye but that of the Frenchman, who, probably, saw it not coming ; for he stood still, firm and erect, on the wall.

“ Confound it ! he *must* have seen the gun fire. He *must* hear it in a moment more,” muttered Eugenio, beginning to doubt that the pleasantry had gone too far, as he tracked the shell towards its destination, and screwing both body and face to the contortion with which the billiard-player often screws both body and face after the ball has parted, as though that action could give it a bias to evade the threatening pocket.



The shell descended, and, as it reached about the level and near the place on which the figure stood, a small white rising smoke showed that it had exploded, and hid for a moment the objects immediately nigh.

When it dispersed, the man was seen no more.

Whether he had jumped behind a traverse, or whether he had thrown himself flat to escape the bursting havock, or whether — worse, — was matter of rapid but useless speculation to the inmates of our battery.

“ Devil take it,” cried Eugenio ; and he stamped his foot, and bit his nail ; “ devil take it, he *could* not have stood there to be killed. He *must* have seen it coming ;” and he turned to the artillery sergeant to confirm this opinion.

“ By my soul, it fell mighty convenient to’m !” said the Irish artillery sergeant.

“ Is it your *pleasure*,” now and then asks a dentist, “ is it your *pleasure* to have your tooth out to-day ?”

"I do not care a pin," is a very ordinary figure of speech, but of doubtful propriety; for one's indifference, it appears to me, must very much depend on the position of the pin. In the cushion of one's chair, for instance, it is absolutely disagreeable, and what one should care very much about.

The word "poor" is an epithet in very common misuse. It is often brought into play, especially in its plaintive sense, in situations where, poor thing, it scarcely knows itself, and where there is not the slightest provocation to account for the use of it. It is degraded to the condition of a mere expletive; and, where there is a real good call for it, how often is it thrust upon the wrong person, the one who, were he consulted, would disclaim compassion.

"*Poor* Mr. —, only think of him, *poor* fellow! How very odd! I believe he was not in joke. He told me a distant connection of his, of another name, whom he never knew till after he heard that the thing happened, who

had been transported to New South Wales a matter of sixteen years ago, is to be hanged to-morrow, by way of a secondary punishment, for coming back from transportation."

The audience were profuse in their repetition of the epithet — generous to excess in the free gift of it to Mr. —. They did not happen to consider it applicable to him who, for an unlawful love of native country, was to undergo a violent and disgraceful death.

This, to be sure, might be attributed to the feeling that so many good regular people have, that it is highly blameable to pity any man who suffers capitally for a breach of the law; that it would be, in some sort, to question the justice of the laws themselves. And the ten or a dozen honest souls that formed the company were probably so good themselves as to be justly scandalised at the notion of holding so much communion with guilt, as to sympathise with it in its sufferings. But I believe, after all, it was rather a flow of idiom than an effort of principle.

Mr. Small, a farmer, well to do, in —shire, fell ill of an acute and dangerous disorder. (By the by, every one was anxious to know if “poor” Mrs. Small’s husband was better.) He died, — Mrs. Small was, of course, in decent affliction. But the word of pity was always transferred from the principal sufferer to her, till he was beyond suffering. Then first it was bestowed on the “poor” corpse, which every one came to visit, and flattered as looking “pleasant.”

Mrs. Small herself, in the first letter of her widowhood, addressed to an intimate female friend, did not make a more judicious application of the favourite epithet. To this friend it was her habit to write once a quarter. We insert three passages; one extracted from each of these quarterly epistles, which followed in due succession after her sad bereavement: —

“ Dear Nelly,

“ My brother-in-law has given the direction
“ of the funeral to a good œconomical under-
“ taker, by name Peebles. I have not seen
“ him, and am not like ; for he is in too large
“ a way to attend himself, and he sends his
“ man for orders, and to see all done handsome,
“ but cheap.

“ *Poor* Mr. Peebles’s man came here last
“ night, and the funeral will be to-morrow. I
“ am in much trouble, as might be expected.
“ My *poor* new black bonnet is not come home,
“ and keeps me fretting ; but *poor* Peebles’s
“ man says I shan’t be disappointed, even if he
“ has to go for it himself. *Poor* Peebles’s
“ man ! he is up early and down late, to see all
“ right. He was in my room this morning
“ before I was out of bed, that all might be
“ decent, &c. &c. &c.

“ Yours to command, dear Nelly,

“ MARY SMALL.”

“ Dear Nelly,

.
It is now three months and
“ better since that *poor* coffin was put under
“ ground, and I declare I feel quite queer and
“ lonesome without it. But business goes on
“ quite well and brisk. *Poor kind* Peebles’s
“ man ! he is off and on ; almost always about
“ the house, doing some kind job or other.
“ He *is* a *very* decent body ; but, I don’t know
“ how it is, I’m not to say comfortable. There’s
“ a sad noise with my sister’s family. You
“ know I never *could* bear children. My late
“ husband, that’s gone, was the only one of the
“ family that could. I am sure I don’t know
“ what I could do without *poor dear* Peebles’s
“ man.

“ Yours to command, dear Nelly,

“ MARY SMALL.”

" Dear Nelly,

.
. *Poor dear kind* Peebles's man
" has never left here ; he's my right hand, and
" he *is* a *very* decent body indeed. It is now
" six *good* months since that *poor* funeral took
" place. I find I am not fit to live alone : I
" was married this morning to *poor* Peebles's
" man.

" Your sincere friend, dear Nelly,

" MARY MERRIMATE.

" P.S. Excuse my change of name."

G.

THE PROMISE KEPT.

THE story I am about to narrate is true: so true, that all the names I have used of persons and places are false. For it never shall be employment of mine to lift, for the satisfaction of an inquisitive and uncharitable world, the curtain, which it is kinder to leave dropped upon the names and the memories of the erring or the afflicted. The world may benefit by the moral of past events without knowing the parties who have been the actors in them. Further elucidation would be impertinent, because useless. It would but withdraw publick attention from facts to persons; and my object would be lost.

I am one of those few men who think it worth while to travel for pleasure in their own

country. I go a tour every summer, and have done so for the last fifteen or twenty years; and yet much still remains to be seen by me in my own land; and I am in no fear of being obliged to quit it to find either novelty or amusement. Of course, in speaking of my own land, I claim the whole of Great Britain and Ireland, and consider every inch of the sister islands lawful ground to an English traveller.

It was in the course of one of these excursions (never mind in what year) that, passing through a retired village, far from any city, my attention was attracted by what appeared to be a new building; and which, at the same time that it excited my admiration by the simple and excellent taste of its architecture, caused me considerable surprise by its size and importance: for there was nothing in that place, or the immediate neighbourhood, that seemed to justify so imposing a fabrick.

I saw, at a glance, that it consisted of a

number of small abodes, and was a charitable institution. But it was too large for a private charity; and, although pretty well acquainted with the localities of such things, I knew of no publick one of the kind in that part of the world.

What part of the world that was, after the declaration I have already made, I shall not be expected to disclose. No: my readers may even suppose it wherever they will that it should be; and choose for themselves out of the whole of Great Britain and Ireland. But, for my own convenience in writing, and for their's in reading, I will call the place Beachton; and I will say that there was nothing else in that small village that would have made me look to the right or to the left, (unless a smarter maiden than one is apt to meet with every day on a dusty road, or a more cherubby child than usually holds up, in the hope of a penny, the compound of dirt and napless beaver he calls his hat, had happened to catch my eye as

I passed through it,) had it not been for these alms-houses.

And yet I ought, even in the absence of these, to have remarked the modest church and neat parsonage. But the one was so hid by its rich mantle of ivy, and the other was so small, so low, and so retiring, I really think I should have overlooked them both, especially as both were at some little distance from the road.


When, however, upon failing to obtain any satisfactory account of the object of my curiosity from the ignorant or stupid people at the only publick house, I was fain to force myself, by their advice, upon the afternoon repose of the clergyman of the parish, and to stop at the foot of the lane leading towards his residence, to look for some one who could direct or conduct me further, I perceived how wrong I had been not to have sooner remarked the venerable little church.

A neat white gate, not far from the lane,

opened upon a carriage-road of the smoothest gravel, and, passing along the greenest of green paddocks, in which the pastor's horse and an Alderney cow were grazing, led to a second but smaller gate in his low garden paling. His house was close to the church, one side of which formed a right angle with it.

The carriage road by the paddock would have taken me to the best or garden entrance. The lane, which ran in a line almost parallel with the paddock, took a turn, where it neared the church, round it and the small church-yard, and led to the porch, which formed the publick entrance from the village. My guide assured me I should find a footpath from thence to the back door of the parsonage. I resolved to show some modesty, at least, in my manner of besieging the good man, and I proceeded by the lane in preference to the carriage road.

I paused, when I reached the church, to admire it. I have said it was almost hidden



by its rich ivy ; but, in some places, its masonry was visible, and I could see it was very ancient, of simple Gothick architecture, and that it still retained a few remains of excellent sculpture. It had two porches, — one, as I have described, formed the publick entrance from the lane ; the other was on the other side of the church, immediately opposite to it. It opened on the broad gravel walk of the parsonage garden, and was the clergyman's private door. Both doors happened to be open when I got there ; and it was pretty, thus looking through the church, to mark the gay flowers of the little garden in bright perspective beyond the low dark arches of the church's nave.

As this means of approaching the parsonage was so near, and so extremely picturesque, I made use of it ; and, passing through the cross aisle of the church, I ventured to ring at the likewise open door of the house.

The pastor, with unaffected simplicity, answered the bell himself, and without making

the slightest apology for so doing. He was alone at home. He had let his one man — clerk, gardener, butler, all in one — go out with his only other servant (the man's own wife), who was cook, dairy-maid, and every thing else, to enjoy an evening walk. He came himself to the door; and, with ready, hospitable civility — such as one only finds in country villages — refused to reply to my questions till we were both seated in his comfortable parlour.

When he knew the cause of my intrusion, and had listened with complacency to my approbation of the exterior of the alms-houses, he said he should be very happy to take me over them himself, and should have pleasure in pointing out and explaining the different objects of the building to one who seemed to be so well able to understand and enter into the subject.

The truth is, that I *was* particularly interested in the subject; and, as I mean to con-

ceal my own name as well as other names, I will own for what reason. I am rich, single, and middle-aged. I have no near relations — no friends whose fortunes are in any great need of my assistance; and I have been for several years casting about for a use to put my worldly goods to when I shall myself have ceased to require them. I wish to make this act a source of amusement for my age: and I have often fancied I should like to be the founder of a charity in my lifetime, which I would endow handsomely at my death; but, till I chanced to see so unexpectedly these alms-houses, I never had met with any establishment of the kind that pleased me. This one was considerably larger than any thing I meditated; but I thought it would admit of reduction; and the style and plan were so much to my mind, that I could easily comprehend the good pastor's perception of my admiration of, and interest in, the work of his own genius, as this turned out to be.

“ We will go there directly, while we have good sun-light before us,” said he, reaching his three-cornered hat from its peg in the passage ; “ and by the time your curiosity shall be gratified, and when you shall be tired of standing and walking, my people will be back, and tea will be ready.”

Who could have withstood an invitation so agreeable in itself, and made with such finished kindness and good breeding?


As we walked together by the carriage-road across the paddock, he stopped at about half-way between the two white gates. I soon saw that this was his custom ; for the Alderney cow immediately came up to him, looking askance with her meek eye for the expected crust of bread from his coat pocket. His nag next approached, whom he patted ; and, although he only pulled for him a handful of the fine clovery grass that grew in profusion under the animal's feet, still the animal took it with an eagerness which showed he knew and loved the hand that bestowed it.

As we proceeded, I could not help taking a sly survey of the man who was gaining with every passing moment on my esteem; and whom I was already ceasing to consider as a stranger. He was, in fact, a rare and guileless being, who really felt for his fellow-man as for a brother; who needed no introduction to become at once friendly and communicative; who, having no thought he would wish hid, used no repelling caution; and who, willing to lend or give all that he possessed, feared no fraud nor robbery. He left his own house open and unwatched. He followed me, a stranger, with confidence and kindness! He was old, but hale and active; and his cheek had a freshness, and his eye a cheerfulness, which were pleasing and certain indications of the health of his body and the tranquillity of his mind.

We soon reached the alms-houses, which were very near the publick road; but on the opposite side of it to the church and parsonage. They were recently erected, as I have said. But the

simple Gothick architecture of the church had been closely imitated; they were built chiefly of stone, of which there appeared to be a great plenty in the neighbourhood; and the rich colour of which accorded most happily with the style of the building. It was likewise a soft kind of stone, but which hardened upon exposure to the air;—so that, with little labour, it had admitted of some very good, although rough, imitations of those carvings about the church, which the ivy permitted one to observe.

In the centre of the principal front was a low arched gateway; over it was a label bearing this inscription: “ Saint Magdalen’s Alms-houses,” and the date. The arch led to a quadrangle within the building, in the middle of which was a large pump, rendered picturesque by the assistance of a really ancient stone cross, raised upon a few broad steps. This pump had a spout on each of its four sides, and the abundant flow of fine sparkling water



was sufficient for the use of the whole establishment.

On the outside, a low stone wall inclosed a strip of land on all sides of the square building, only breaking off at the gateway, which fronted the road. This strip of land was divided, by light wooden palings, into as many gardens as there were alms-houses. All were well stocked with vegetables; each had a narrow border of flowers under the broad casement windows, and a few standard fruit trees, chosen with judicious reference to the different aspects. — Each house had two doors, and a passage through from the quadrangle to the garden, but no openings were permitted in the surrounding wall, — so that all ingress and egress to and from the village must take place at the gateway, on either side of which were the chambers of the overseer of the establishment. In short, I never before saw, in one building, so many advantages collected together. Nothing, either of use or comfort, was sacrificed

to taste; and yet a finished taste, and a superior judgment, must have united their efforts to conceive the plan.

But, as my readers are not probably intending to build alms-houses with me, they will dispense with any more minute description of my model. I remained, looking and admiring, erecting not castles but alms-houses in the air, and never satisfying myself upon the matter, when, at last, I perceived the sun had sunk to rest, and recollected that my venerable guide, who was evidently a man of early hours, must be in want of his evening repast.


He smiled when he saw the reluctance with which I quitted the building, and noted the slight sigh that escaped me upon the reflection, that, in another hour, all my unripe, but promising ideas, might die for want of nourishment and emulation.

“We must return here together to-morrow,” said the pastor. “I am a selfish old fellow, and never like to part with an agree-

able companion ; and I make it a rule always to have, under my own little roof, a well-aired bed ready for a friend, or a benighted traveller. You are the latter at present ; but, before we part, I hope you will let me consider you as a friend. You shall see all the plans and calculations of expense that have assisted me in the formation of this establishment. It was my solace for several years that it was about. You will know why I needed solace when I shall have explained to you the history of it. I have only been its willing architect and steward. You shall know why it was founded — and by whom ; for, large as it is, it is a private charity, and a melancholy tale goes with it. Many travellers have, like yourself, been attracted by the building, and have applied to me to see it. Some few have already taken hints from it for smaller, but similar, purposes. But to no one have I as yet disclosed the particulars which I shall not hesitate to trust to your honour and sympathy by and by.”

We had reached his door—we found tea ready for us in the parlour—and tea that might have tempted an anchorite, and have satisfied a voluptuary; a pool of the richest cream from the Alderney; butter made from the same; brown bread; fruit freshly gathered; and a welcome which was the greatest treat of all.

After a plentiful repast, we sat in the twilight, which was gradually gathering brightness under the light of a rising harvest moon. We moved our chairs to the opened casement; we inhaled the dewy fragrance of the flowers that perfumed the air about us, and gazed in such full contentment upon the tranquil scene around, that, as is ever the case with full contentment in this world, it bordered upon melancholy. Well did that painter understand his subject who, in describing upon canvass a moonlight scene of deep repose, placed one single horse in the attitude of grazing, in a shadow on the fore-ground.



The pastor's nag had approached the garden paling, on the outside of which we could trace his gently moving form, and hear him as he cropped monotonously the dewy tops of the rich herbage.

I reminded my host of his promise to entrust to me the history of St. Magdalen's charity.

"I have not forgotten it," he answered; "I was even now thinking to bespeak your attention, when the recollection of circumstances very interesting to myself carried me back many a year, and recalled the forms of those with whom I have so often, and in this very place, enjoyed such an hour as this."

After a few minutes of silence and recollection, he spoke as follows:—

"I have been pastor of the same little flock for many years, and have never had reason to repent the having given up large preferment and society in exchange for the peaceful retirement of this village. But it was not always so

deserted. When I first lived here, there were some gentlemen's houses in the neighbourhood, and I was within a half-hour's walk of three or four very agreeable families. These houses are now appropriated to other purposes — the principal one, and the nearest to me, is now a farm-house. It was formerly inhabited by a gentleman who had been my contemporary and companion at college; and I believe his continued friendship in after life, and the close neighbourhood of his residence, chiefly induced me to make the exchange of livings which fixed me for the rest of my life in this spot.

“ He had an only son; and, when the boy grew big enough to receive more than nursery instruction in English and Latin, his mother put his studies under my direction. My friends could not be persuaded to part with an only child; and they were pleased to think he would gain as much under my tuition as at a publick school. I was anxious to deserve their good opinion, and soon prevailed upon them to let

me have their son under my own roof for at least some days out of every week.

“ The boy was quick and intelligent, and, as I contrived to render study rather an interesting occupation than a laborious duty, and took care never to disgust him with books, by pressing for attention to a dry subject when his mind was naturally wandering to a near and a happy home, he soon had a taste for, and a pleasure in, our literary pursuits ; and, what was as desirable as it is rare, loved the master who conveyed instruction to his mind.

“ He was so forward in his education, that he was ready early for college ; and, before he was nineteen, he left the University. At this time his mother died ; and Leonard Weston, being unwilling to desert his father, gave up a plan he had formed for travelling, and spent most of his time at home.

“ At his own request, we continued our studies ; and I had the delight of seeing a mind, naturally well endowed, ripen and refine itself

by judicious cultivation. He was, indeed, a very accomplished gentleman; and, at twenty-two, when he lost his father, and came into possession of a large and unencumbered fortune, few men could be better justified in looking forward into life with confidence and pleasure.

“ He was now at liberty to travel; but he had become attached to a cousin of his own, a very young and extremely beautiful girl. She was his equal in every respect, excepting in fortune; but that was easily dispensed with where already there was so much, and they were married.

“ They settled in this neighbourhood. I saw them constantly, daily; and I marked with joy their happiness, which was of so rational a nature that they needed no change of scene, no society beyond their own, to render it complete. They loved their home; they employed themselves usefully; and they were beloved and respected by all who knew them.

“ After two years of marriage, they had a son : and now did I begin to tremble for them ; for this event, which a casual observer would have considered the only one that had been wanting to perfect their happiness, came, as I feared, to mar it. The child was too beautiful, his large blue eye was too bright, the tinge upon his cheek too vivid, the ivory of his skin too spotless, for health. I ventured to hint my fears to Leonard ; but how could he, how could any one, resolve to disturb the joy of the young mother’s heart, as she exulted over the uncommon loveliness of her offspring ?

“ I was too true a prophet. When barely one year old, the infant died, after a few hours of illness. The mother’s mind had not been schooled to resignation. How should it ? She was herself so young, so like a blooming child. This sudden heavy loss first taught her there was sorrow in a world, to her erewhile so full of bliss.

“ She gave way with violence to her feelings.

With the mistaken energy of enthusiastick youth, she fancied it her duty to aggravate and to prolong her grief. She never quitted the body of her child — she attended it to the grave. I strove in vain to recall her to her real duties. I dreaded lest her health should suffer. She ought to have spared, to have tranquillised herself, for many reasons, but chiefly for the sake of another child, whose birth might haply have supplied the loss she mourned, but which she destroyed by these undue exertions. She fell ill, and, for several months, was in a state of alarming weakness. Her husband did not sufficiently controul her; his love was so fond, so doating, he could not bear to thwart her, or do any thing that might savour of severity; and thus he lent himself to all her exaggerated feelings.

“ He told me one day that he was going abroad for the recovery of his wife’s health, by her mother’s desire, who thought change of scene and amusement would withdraw her mind

from the subject of her melancholy. I opposed the plan, and I did it upon principle. It is true she was ill, but she was young, and naturally healthy; and her illness had been of a nature which accounted for her state. Her medical attendant did not consider it necessary that she should change the climate, although he did not forbid the experiment; and all their friends were unanimous in their applause of a measure which would banish two reluctant beings from their home, the scene of their duties, and, till an accident had for a season clouded it, that of their happiness. I had never known any of my married acquaintance who had improved by a residence abroad, however short: either they had been discontented and unhappy during their absence, (the best case conceivable,) or they had suddenly imbibed such a taste for all that cannot be procured, seen, or enjoyed, here, that their after life was invariably one of uneasiness, complaint, and privation.

“ Yes, I opposed the plan; and Leonard, who had no great wish to move, had almost yielded to my reasoning, when his wife’s mother (who was likewise his aunt, and who assumed power over both of them) arrived, and soon settled all things her own way. She would not listen to a word against it; declared her daughter’s life depended on a change of climate; arranged every thing; urged them to remain abroad long enough to see the whole of Italy, Germany, Switzerland; packed them up; hurried them off; parted with her daughter without a tear, and said, and perhaps thought, that she had done her duty.

“ Their journey had been somewhat delayed by a circumstance which I must now mention. The infant had been deposited in the clergyman’s vault, there being none appropriated to the family of Mr. Weston, no member of it having been till now buried at Beachton. It was natural that Leonard should wish to have his child placed in a vault belonging to himself.

The young mother was most eager on the subject; and, accordingly, a vault was immediately begun. They both took much interest in the work, and delayed their departure a few weeks, that they might see it completed.

“ The evening before they started, they both came to my house. We proceeded together to the church, which we entered by that garden porch on our right. In their presence I placed the little coffin with my own hands in the spot they had fixed that it should rest in. A space was left on each side of it, and these bereaved parents, joining their hands across it, made to each other a solemn promise that they would lie, when their own lives should end, one on either side of their child. Then, turning to me, ‘ You are our witness,’ said Leonard Weston; ‘ and, if you should survive us, you must see this done.’

“ ‘ My dear young friends,’ I answered, ‘ may I never see that day; for, in the course of nature, I must go long before you. I pray

that I may never see you resting here — but that, after a long life of peace and happiness, your sons' sons may do this duty by you both.'

"I took a hand of each, and led them to the narrow stair by which we ascended to the church — and locking the vault, and putting the key in my pocket — 'but I am guardian of this little dismal chamber,' I said, 'and it shall be my care till you both come back again.' The young mother threw her arms around my neck, and sobbing, said, 'Oh! I wish we were to stay with you and with our child; why do we go?' — Ah! why indeed? I answered mentally; and yet I little thought I was then looking my last upon her! Her mother's voice was heard calling for her from my garden, and approaching. She dried her tears, put down a veil which was upon her hat, and left the church by the other porch, as if to conceal from her parent where she had been, and what about.

"During the first months of their absence I

received constant letters from Leonard, and they generally contained a few words from his wife, the young Helena — a few words of kind recollection of myself, and of tender regret in allusion to her severe and early loss. But her health and spirits were improving rapidly, and, when they had been about half a year from home, Leonard wrote me the pleasing intelligence that both were perfectly restored.

“ From this time, his letters became less frequent — and were dated from different parts of Italy. They mentioned plans of amusement, and extended travel, which I sighed over, because these would necessarily much prolong his absence. After the first year and half, he ceased to write at all. Many months had then passed since I had received a postscript, or even a message, from his wife. I continued to write to him under cover to men of business at Rome, as we had concerted I should do; but I got no answers, and my uneasiness became great, in proportion with my affection for

Leonard, and the interest I took in his welfare, and happiness.

“ The second year passed, and still no news of him; a third was almost gone, when, one morning, a letter arrived in his well-known hand-writing. It bore an English post-mark only, and my heart welcomed it most gladly, for I thought it would announce his happy return to me, and to his home. Alas! it did, indeed, announce his return, for the first lines told me that when I should receive it, he would be at Beachton — but alone, and miserable!

“ I paused to wipe my glasses, and to recover from the shock — to breathe a prayer for my unhappy friend, and ask for resignation in his name. Would that my first surmise had been correct! Would that his heart’s treasure had been taken from him by death! that she had died in her youth — her innocence, — in her soul’s beauty! Yes, yes, he *was* alone, and he was indeed most miserable. Deserted by the one being to whom he had looked for all his

happiness, — by her whom he had loved and cherished with affection that was perhaps too ardent to be fitly placed on aught of earth, — by her who looked and smiled so like a dream of heaven one would not have believed that sin could find a harbour in her least guarded thought. And yet, she had left him — she had sealed his misery and her own disgrace !

“ I cannot, if I wished it, relate particulars. Poor Leonard never would expose her conduct, even to *my* censure. I only knew from him those circumstances that could in any manner palliate her offence — and these he loved to dwell upon. He blamed her mother ; her education had been neglected by her, her strong feelings too little corrected, too much indulged. He blamed himself : he should have paused a year or two ere he had married her ; she was so very young, — she knew so little of the world ; — and then, he had allowed his better judgment to be over-ruled, and had yielded weakly to her mother’s wish that they should

travel; he had not used sufficient caution in their society when abroad; he had been too proud of her, — too fond of seeing her admired; his own habits had been too retired, too studious. These, and others similar, were the excuses he was ever seeking for her, hoping to convince me that she had erred less widely. Alas! they only served to enhance her fault with me, to prove the value of the heart she had broken.

“Nor could he deceive himself by this fond sophistry. I have often known him pause in the midst of it, and shudder when the truth, in its plain unvarnished name of guilt, would suddenly lie bare before him; when he would see it in the scenery around; meet it in his empty, solitary home; feel it in his own blighted and most hard condition.

“It was long before I ventured to enquire if he would take any measures in consequence of this distressing event. ‘None,’ he answered, ‘unless it be her wish that I should

release her, as far as man can do it, from her vow to me. If *she* shall wish it — and for her own sake solely — it shall be done as speedily, as secretly as possible; — otherwise, never !’

“ He seemed glad I had put this question to him, which encouraged me to proceed — but with all the gentle tenderness a fatherly friendship, such as mine was, knew so well how to mingle with my enquiries. I wished very much to learn what had become of his unhappy wife — and I told him so. He said he did not know, and that he could hardly say how he felt on that subject.

“ ‘ When she left me,’ he continued, ‘ I was, in truth, incapable of following her : but, had I been able, I should not have done it then. No : she had left me ! she had fancied she could be happier elsewhere, with another ! Why should I have followed her ? What *could* have happened at that moment that would not have caused her pain, and rendered her act more publick ? I know not where she is

— I must not try to know. Alas ! if I did, there would my heart follow her. My heart, my thoughts, my wishes, — all would be there ; — perhaps my steps would even wander with them. Oh ! if I could believe — if I could hope . . .’

“ He was silent — but his thoughts were busy still upon the same sad subject ; and, after a while, as if unconscious of the pause, he continued, —

“ ‘ She is not happy. Wherever she is, she is suffering. — I know it — I feel it ; — but I cannot give you reasons for what I am myself convinced of. She loved me once ; — and such a love as she once felt for me, when we were here together — when we lost our child — cannot be quite forgotten ! When such a love ceases to bring happiness to our breast, it must bring something — pain — remorse. — It cannot, cannot be forgotten.’

“ I had hoped that time would shed its healing power over the wounds of my poor

friend's heart. So it would have done, had he lost his happiness in almost any other manner. But in *this* affliction, what was to reconcile him to his fate? What was to make him feel that fate decided, sealed, and requiring only patience and submission on his part? His wife still lived: but where? — but how? Alas! he knew not. And both were matter of uneasy surmise — of unceasing, agitating speculation.

“ In the first months of his sad trial, Leonard had taken care to place a large sum of money at his banker's for the use of his unhappy wife, with orders that it should be given to any one who should ask for it in her name. He had taken measures by which she would have been apprised of this, and of his intention to place a similar sum annually in the same manner.

He had been intensely anxious to know if this sum were called for; and, when he understood that such had been the case, he appeared

much relieved. Year after year the money was so placed; and as regularly had it been asked for.

“Year after year passed, and almost insensibly. My poor friend’s melancholy had become habitual; his health had sunk gradually; a restless uneasiness had long deprived him of quiet by day — of sleep by night. I saw him so constantly that my eye became familiar with the change. As is but too common when one watches a very slow decay, I ceased to remember what he had been — what he ought still to be. I saw him only as he was. I compared the day then present with the one just passed. I hailed a smile upon his countenance, without examining if it were the result of cheerfulness, or conceded to kindness and to friendship only. I marked with satisfaction a transitory tinge upon his cheek; for I had ceased to wonder at its usual undue paleness. I rejoiced when he would seek the balmy air, and walk under the dark shadows of those elms, although he

required this aged arm to support his uncertain steps. I had grown accustomed to the cruel chance by which his youth was blighted, and which had caused this sad anomaly.

“ But my attention was too soon called to his real and alarming state. I was summoned to attend a friend, — one I had known in youth, whom I had been much attached to, and who wished to see me ere he should die. I could not choose but go, although it was with much reluctance that I left poor Leonard; for there was no one else in whose society he could vary the monotony of his sad days.

“ I was detained some weeks; and, when, at length, my friend’s decease gave me liberty to return to Beachton, and I again saw Leonard Weston after this short absence, I cannot say how greatly I was shocked. Alas! the first glance told me he was dying — slowly, but surely. He saw my concern — he read my feelings; and, taking my hand with kind affection, he said, — ‘ Why should you grieve

to see me thus, when I am well content to have it so?’

“This was no matter for dissembling. Leonard knew the truth: and, from this time, we spoke together of his death as of an event that might be very near — that could not be far distant. His affairs needed but little settlement. His only anxiety was about his wife. His only care was to settle upon her for her life the large annual sum she had been accustomed to receive. He said to me one day, —

“ ‘ You little know the comfort I have felt as often as I have heard this sum has been received. It has told me what I so much wished to know but did not dare to ask. It has told me, more surely—more solemnly—than words could have done, that she has lived alone. I mean, that she has long awakened from the dream that parted us—and awakened from it never to dream it more. She would not have received this sum from me, unless it had been for her own—her single use—to

save a being once my own from deeper humiliation, and from want.'

"It was then within a day of fifteen years from the time when Leonard Weston left his home to travel with his young and beautiful wife. Full twelve years had they been parted. Twelve years had elapsed since his return to Beachton; — a sad, long, uneventful period — marked only by a few constantly and painfully recurring anniversaries. My narrative has brought us to the twelfth anniversary of the event, perhaps the most fraught with recollections, distressing and agitating to poor Leonard's feelings, of that evening when, as I have described, he and the young mother consigned the remains of their infant to the last resting-place; — of that evening when both had felt so confident of passing life together, they needed but to order that death should make no parting.

"I looked with fear to every thing, however trifling, that might bring with it agitation

or excitement to my friend. His life now hung upon a thread so slender that I saw exertion must be fatal. He had, however, passed the day better than I expected. He had suffered ; but he had seen my anxiety, and had striven to spare it.

“ I had been reading to him. We were sitting, as you and I are sitting at this moment, at this opened casement. The season was the same. The moon had risen. All was still and tranquil. I had closed the book, and we were gazing mournfully — he on the calm landscape, I upon his pale cheek — his faded, but handsome features.

“ His eye suddenly fixed upon some object in the distance, and guided mine to the spot which had attracted his attention. It was that furthest gate, which even now we see so white and plainly in the moonlight. It opened, — and, though the hour was strange for aught to pass that way, something large and dark came through the gate. It halted at a little distance

on the road; and then another, but a smaller, body likewise passed the gate. This last we could perceive to be a chaise. It remained stationary within side of the paddock; and a single figure, after closing the gate, joined the first object we had remarked, and walked by the side of it, as it advanced slowly up the road towards the second gate, which you see close to the corner of the church. There it stopped; and the person, who had somewhat preceded it, leaving it there, entered the garden alone, and came to the door of the house.

“ Leonard had risen from his seat. His eye had never quitted, for an instant, the shapeless mass. As it neared the second gate, it had been no longer shapeless. It was a hearse; and the man who attended it was clad in black.

“ I hastened to the door to ask his business. He was in years; his appearance that of an upper servant, or tradesman. He drew a letter from his pocket, and enquired if he saw in me

the pastor of Beachton. I held out my hand, which trembled, I hardly knew wherefore, for the letter: but another hand, more feeble than my own, but to which strong emotion lent energy in that moment, had seized it. Leonard had taken the letter, and had returned with it to the parlour. I followed him directly. The short-lived vigour had subsided. He was lying back in his chair, gasping for breath; and the letter had fallen from the trembling fingers, which then had no power, no force to break the seal.

“ Without speaking a word, I stooped for the letter. I drew my chair close to his. A light had been already brought, and I prepared to look at the contents. Poor Leonard’s eye followed my every movement. He had no power to stir or speak: but that eye was quick and eloquent, and I could understand its meaning. Yes; we had both already guessed the truth. The letter was from his wife — written in her last illness. Yes; that

hearse did, indeed, contain all that was left of her on earth.

“ It was addressed to me. She desired me to give a packet, which I found inclosed, to her husband. It contained bank bills to a very large amount — even all the sums he had given her annually, with interest for twelve years. She prayed that it might be spent in raising some charitable institution for the benefit of the most desolate and needy belonging to the parish of Beachton. She said it had been her only consolation, during the years of her long penance and deep affliction, to hoard this sum, the gift of continued, however ill-deserved, affection, and to hoard it for a purpose which should record her penitence in the scene of the duties she had forsaken.”

The good pastor paused. His voice had become weak and low, evidently from the emotion with which he still contemplated these touching events. He was silent for a few minutes — seeking, and finding, in his own

reflections, the composure with which he soon resumed his affecting narrative.

“ You can judge,” he said, “ if this real penitent has been obeyed. To the best of my powers I have fulfilled her desires ; and have studied to give full effect to her charitable intentions. But I must finish the little that remains to be told of my melancholy history.

“ Her letter ended with these words :—

“ ‘ Give this packet to my husband, and explain to him my wishes. Tell him, my heart has thanked him, as only he can be thanked, for his constant recollection of a wife, who, for one short moment of her life, and only one, forgot him. Tell him, my repentance has been long — unceasing — deep ; that my own hands have ministered to my wants — that my own industry has supplied the scanty living I have required. I have found humble friends in the persons in whose house I have lodged for many years. The man, who

‘ will deliver this letter, and his wife, have
‘ been these friends ; — none other have I
‘ seen or known. One more request — and only
‘ one : — Oh ! lay me by my child — silently
‘ — secretly — as becomes my fallen state ; —
‘ and tell my husband — tell Leonard — there
‘ is *one* promise I have kept ! ’ —

“ Poor Leonard ! ” said the pastor — rising from his seat, and closing the casement — “ that night I prayed long and late — with him — for him — over him ! — They were buried on the same day. — To-morrow I will show you where they lie together — they, and their child — a re-united family.”

L.

THE MAN AND THE LIONESS.

— “ Sir, she is deep of counsel —
 Brave is she, too, of heart, and strong of purpose :
 Trust me, I would not choose to stand betwene
 That lady and her fortunes.” *Old Play.*

“ **D**EAR heart ! how I do love a real, true ghost story ! ” “ Do you indeed, Miss ? ”
 “ Yes, I do, — best of all things in the world.”
 “ Well, it would be a pity you should not have what you love best of all things in the world : so let us put out the candles. And stir the fire, that we may have just light enough to be frightened by ; — and bring your chair close — closer, — and now — ” “ Oh ! but shall it be a true one ? — with names ? ” “ My dear Miss Clementina, do you think me capable of deceiving you ? have I ever ? True my story

shall be, Miss Clementina, — true as — but you must forgive my concealing names: those I cannot reveal, not even to you. You will see, as I proceed, that there are family considerations of the utmost delicacy, affecting the happiness and honour of more than one person, which make reserve on this point a duty, particularly as the story was told me in confidence by one of the parties. Suffice it that the story and the names are tolerably well known in the neighbourhood of Balcoffery, not a hundred miles from the border; and, if ever you should make a tour of the lakes, (which I strongly recommend on many accounts,) you may learn more.

“ Mr. A. had reached an age which I fear that you, Miss Clementina, would deem rather oldish, but which, believe me, we who have, for some years, been fain to look back upon thirty, teach ourselves to look forward to as to a very pretty time of life. 'Tis when the cheek, casting off its childish bloom and un-

meaning roundness, assumes a steady yellow hue, and a concavity of outline, which add much to the interest of a sensible human countenance; and a slight baldness on the top, and a mixture of grey, sprinkled through the short lusty curls which cluster round the poll, leaving the forehead, as it ought to be, open, intelligent, and expressive, give a chivalrous and historical character to the superiour man. It is the commencement of the age which may truly be called that of love, because it is that at which love can no longer be suspected of partaking of the fanciful or gross, but has become love by itself love, refined into pure sentiment. He had been a soldier. I would that I could interest you for my hero; that I could paint him" — "Not above two-and-thirty, if you love me." — "Miss Clementina, I *do* love you; but truth is my idol: Mr. A. was forty-five, and still a bachelor. His fortune noble,— his habits regular, slightly given to the literary, — his temper liberal and confiding. He

had a heart with a place for the tenderest impressions, — and a woman servant with a place of cook and housekeeper. Wearied with that promiscuous thing which mixed society offers under the name of friendship, he had chosen, for the long intervals of classick retirement in the country, one steady, soothing, humble friend. Humble, did I say? Oh no! — she was a single gentleman's cook and housekeeper. Not that he was a recluse; for, yearly, as the spring came round, would he issue forth to reconnoitre the deluge of London society, when the floods were out; but, dove-like, would he return to the ark of his calm happiness, and always with a sprig of some sort, (and that of the sort most in vogue,) sprigged upon a votive muslin, for the tutelary genius of his home."—"And what was her name?"—"Nay, that is unfair. Her Christian name was Grace; but that name gives you an altogether erroneous notion of the cook and housekeeper. I would rather have her known by that which,

out of her hearing, was her usual appellation, among the poorer sort who came to the hall for purposes of petition, the middling sort who came for purposes of business, and the higher sort who came for purposes of ceremony:—in short, all sorts of people in the neighbourhood. Seldom do persons, filling a responsible station like Mrs. Grace's in a country gentleman's house, fail of obtaining, in the familiar converse of the vicinage, some name, widely distinct from that which either descent or baptism gave them, but usually derived from some salient peculiarity of appearance, character, or comportment;—a species of property this, of which the possessor is generally the last to be conscious. The cook and housekeeper was, by all round, called **THE LIONESS**. The authorship of this name, (a name, in the strictest sense, *de guerre*,) was, as may be supposed, never boasted of, for fear of consequences: the origin of it, indeed, is matter of mere speculation. It might have had some reference to those ample and

bushy ringlets, of a colour which by the friends of the wearer is generally called bright auburn, and which, on those high days when Mrs. Grace was wont to stalk forth from her solitude, swelled around a sanguine countenance, in volume, in texture, and in hue, not unlike the mane of that awful animal. Or it might be supposed to have borne some distant allusion to the attribute of an uncertain temper, which was sometimes known to display itself with alarming vivacity. Be this as it may, Mrs. Grace was, by high and low, by all but her master, who never heard it, (for echo itself feared to repeat it within the precincts of her influence,) known by the name of ‘The Lioness.’

“The Lioness was not old: she was full ten years younger than her master; and, indeed, her general appearance, though calculated to inspire terror, was not uncomely. Comely enough it was to have made it a difficult position for her, keeping house alone for a

single susceptible gentleman, in a censorious world, had it not been for the protection given to her character by a temper which might bid defiance to the tenderness of a master however susceptible, and impose silence on the animadversions of a world however censorious. As it was, nothing could be less suspicious than the *ménage*; so little so indeed, that, as time passed on, it appeared that The Lioness considered as superfluous those reserves in her manner towards her master which prudence had at first dictated. For the first few years after assuming the power of the keys, she had been in the habit of making that reserve very apparent; so studious was she of the influence of example. Her manner of answering his simplest questions had more of distant respectfulness than appeared altogether necessary. 'His Honour,' she would say, 'is very condescending; but servants should know their distance, and not suffer their betters to make them forget it.' Of late, however, this austerity


was visibly relaxed; and, on one very remarkable Sunday, the first of the fifth year of Mrs. Grace's residence at the Hall, she was observed to linger in the church porch, as the congregation came out, and Mr. A. to advance, and, with the gentlest look imaginable, to offer her his arm, which she with very little reluctance accepted; and home to the Hall they trudged together. This was the first year of The Lioness's unrestricted regency, the forty-fifth of Mr. A.'s age, and that at which the most eventful part of this narrative commences. He had lately returned from London, whither he had gone to administer as executor to the will of an old school-fellow, between whom and him the most friendly recollections had always subsisted. Captain R. of the navy, the defunct testator, had, on his death-bed, appointed Mr. A. guardian to his only daughter, who, at her birth, had been deprived of her mother, and for whose sake, during the eighteen years which had passed since that event, her father

had retired from the service, to live on his estate, which was ample. The last wishes of a dying friend, which to the honourable and good-natured heart of Mr. A. were commands, had thus imposed upon him an arrangement quite new to his habits. He determined, until his ward should be of age, not only to devote himself to the care of her interests, but to extend to her, in her otherwise unfriended state, the protection also of his home. To this project, in its earliest moments, The Lioness felt it right to offer an humble demurrer, in the way of advice. In the true spirit of faithful counsel, she represented to Mr. A. the awkwardness of such an arrangement. ‘And, my dear sir, what would the world say to an unmarried person being admitted as an inmate to your house? And, besides, I know the kindness of your Honour’s heart so well, that I fear that the influence which an amiable person, constantly residing with you, would obtain, might be sadly misinterpreted.’ All this was

the more considerate and disinterested in The Lioness, as it was a difficulty which had never suggested itself to her in her own case, during the five years which she herself had passed, usually quite alone with her master, at the Hall. These suggestions, much pondered by Mr. A., nevertheless gave way before a strong feeling of duty to his friend's child; 'though,' as he often afterwards said, 'I never before had so hard a battle to fight as that with poor dear Grace, whose affection for my service made her attach more importance to the matter than it deserved, and put it in twenty lights that never would have occurred to me.' At length, however, it was settled that Mary, the orphan heiress in question, should begin her residence at the Hall; and it was the very Sunday after this plan was formed, that the scene of the church-porch was performed before the whole parish; afterwards to be discussed in all its bearings, actual and probable, by all the spec-

tators, and by all to whom the spectators narrated it.

“ Another change was wrought by the arrival of Mary. Till then, one of Mrs. Grace’s prevailing topicks had been a desire that his Honour might find somebody worthy his hand in matrimony. Often would she say, ‘ I am sure I wish there was a missis.’ It was a kind wish — a natural wish, — and kindly and naturally expressed, — not unfrequently in the hearing of Mr. A. himself, who, on more than one occasion, had been seen to reply by a slight attempt to chuck The Lioness under the chin, who always, however, put by the attempt by a decorous raising of the hand, followed by a courtesy, and a faint smile ; — for on him, and him alone, The Lioness would sometimes smile. But, after Mary came, — it might be accident, — but ‘ I am sure I wish there was a missis,’ was never repeated. No ; that sentence was thenceforward banished from the volume of the Lioness’s apophthegms.



“ The gentle sympathies of one who, till then, had been a stranger to her, descended like balm upon a timid and affectionate heart like Mary’s, bleeding from its first wound, the separation from the only parent it had ever known. Her temper and deportment presented one of the most touching forms in which nature, always beautiful, appears in the character of a well educated, strongly feeling, and unaffected girl. Her manner, naturally joyous, and which till then had never been clouded, was now overcast with a grief which only added more tenderness to an open and unsuspecting disposition. She sought for support through her affliction; she found it in her kind guardian; and those affections which, in very early youth, cannot die and be buried in any grave, however dear to them, now centred all in the generous friend of the parent whom she had lost. They were warmly met, and frankly shared. This was an interest repugnant to the hitherto undisputed autocracy of The Lioness. Mary

was very beautiful; but this consideration, of itself, could not have awakened the rivalry of The Lioness, since she had always professed to consider beauty as a mere snare to the unwary, and, therefore, could not be suspected of feeling the pride of it in herself, nor of envying the possession of it in another. It could not, then, be this that disposed her to take a less favourable view of Mary's qualities than others did. She had higher and sounder grounds of discontent. She had determined to be the sole founder and promoter of Mr. A.'s happiness; and no wonder that she inwardly resented the appearance of a joint contributor. Yet she wisely scorned to show her aversion before Mr. A., nor did she resent on him her sense of the injury she had sustained in his growing fondness for Mary. On the contrary; the influence which her masculine mind had given her over the easy and indolent temper of her master, was only employed to warn him, as she felt was her duty, but very gently, against

any possible abuse of his generosity on the part of the orphan. She would willingly admit to him that Miss Mary had a very winning way with her ; ‘ and Heavens forbid that his Honour should ever have reason to repent his extraordinary goodness to her ; but so few people appear at first what they really are ; she had no reason, to be sure, to doubt Miss Mary’s gratitude to his Honour ; but it was no wonder, — and it was what his Honour must expect, — that people should think his Honour’s house might not be quite so much his own as it once had been. And *this* she, The Lioness, *would* say, that *if* Miss Mary *should* ever be ungrateful to his Honour, and take upon herself, — (which she, The Lioness, really was not of opinion that she did yet), — she would show herself to be more designing and unprincipled than she (The Lioness) had any right now to think her.’ With these and the like reasonings did she fulfil her duty to her conscience and to her master ; who, in his turn, if his

tenderness to Mary daily increased, entertained a still higher and deeper sense of The Lioness's devotedness to his interests. Towards Mary she assumed the authoritative part of a very elder sister, and would give her, gratis, a deal of very excellent counsel. Meanwhile, as the establishment at the Hall increased, The Lioness gradually rose above the mechanical and operative business of the house. The care of the kitchen had devolved upon a new and subordinate servant; and The Lioness was placed, as it were, upon an eminence from which she only cast her eye around and down upon the general concerns of the family. She had, for some time past, taken her seat at the table and in the drawing-room, and now superintended the conduct of Mary in the character of a sort of governess. In this her new vocation, she had the disadvantage, as you may already have suspected, of as vulgar a manner as can well be conceived: she was the vulgarest-mannered person, in fine, that ever was

promoted to the brevet rank of gentlewoman. Two years rolled on, and poor Mary's happiness began to be seriously affected by the position in which she found herself. She saw, and deeply felt, the jealousy of Mrs. Grace; and, in consequence, her manner became constrained with him towards whom she felt the most tenderly. Sometimes the observant eye of The Lioness would detect a tear starting in Mary's corresponding feature, (if indeed so mild an eye could be said to bear any analogy to that meteor which flamed from under The Lioness's brow,) as it turned upon her benefactor. Mary looked forward with a very mixed feeling to the time, now within a year, when the law would impose upon her the duty of determining as to her future position. Her frank and tender affection for Mr. A. made her cleave to his house as to her home; and yet, in that home, she was suspected and disliked by the person who was, in fact, the mistress of it. Her spirits grew weak, her health began

to fail: it was evident that her disorder was one that kindness might have cured; but, alas! he, to whom she had never in vain looked for kindness, was the one between whom and her an enemy had fixed a barrier, and sate sternly and vigilantly to watch it. To confirm the poor girl's unhappiness, Mr. A.'s manner towards her began manifestly to change; and from what could this change proceed? Poor Mary's unassuming and unresisting character, which might have disarmed unkindness in any one, never could have aroused it in the mild and benevolent Mr. A. And yet some cause there was which deeply impaired his usual gentleness; till at length Mary's ill health took a more threatening form, and an attack of fever, which confined her for some days to her bed, rekindled all Mr. A.'s former tenderness. The year had come round, and in that bed of sickness her one-and-twentieth birth-day found her. Mrs. Grace's cares were redoubled: hour after hour would she sit in the

room of her charge. It was but for a short interval each day that Mr. A. was admitted to the bedside of Mary; and then only in the august presence of The Lioness, who warned him against staying long, or speaking much, with her. On these occasions, the poor invalid would gaze upon him with an expression of earnestness and anxiety, attributed by Mrs. Grace to increasing fever, and therefore, in her judgment, an increasing reason against his remaining longer in the room to agitate her by his presence. Mrs. Grace, wise in all things, had undertaken to be, not only her nurse, but her physician also. She compounded her medicines, and latterly seldom left her. She had, as Lord Clarendon somewhere says, ‘a head to contrive, a tongue to persuade, and a hand to execute any sort of cookery.’ One day The Lioness complained sadly to Mr. A., that Miss Mary would no longer take her medicines, that she was certainly in a very dangerous state, and that his authority would be

necessary to make her submit to what her symptoms demanded. In vain did poor Mary plead that the medicines seemed not to do her any good, or abate the violence of her disorder, and, weeping much, beg that they might be discontinued. During the contest, Mrs. Grace stood at the window, with the cup in her hand, now and then motioning to Mr. A. that the patient's head was not quite right, and that some gentle compulsion must be used to shorten the discussion. What could Mr. A. do? He insisted sternly upon the medicine being taken. 'I know not what it is,' said Mary: 'it smells of laudanum. Do they give laudanum in fevers?' It was a reflection upon the skill of Mrs. Grace. Mr. A. lost all patience. At length the poor patient sobbed aloud, and consented to take it, but from no one but himself. 'And now,' she said, stretching out her pale hand to him, 'this act of obedience may be the last act of my poor life: forgive me all the trouble I have given

you.' — She paused; — he interrupted her — 'I must first insist on the draught being taken.' — He gave it to her himself; she swallowed it, and turned her face away, while Mrs. Grace took the empty cup from her to rinse it. He was leaving her: — 'Stay,' said she; 'I have obeyed you. Now grant me one favour, — grant it me for — for my father's sake, — one word with you alone.' — 'No, Sir,' interrupted Mrs. Grace; 'in her present state of excitement it must not be: every word adds to her fever.' — 'It shall not be more than two minutes,' again pleaded Mary; 'but speak to you I must, and,' added she, rising in her bed, and wringing his hand with an energy which shook her whole frame, 'I will!' — 'Well, for two minutes, and no longer,' said Mr. A. The Lioness remonstrated; till, it occurring to Mr. A. that a dispute was more likely to promote fever than two minutes of conversation, he gave way to the entreaty, promising to stint the time within the proposed limit. Mrs. Grace

left the room unwillingly, muttering something about its being almost as bad as murder.

“ ‘ And now,’ said Mary, ‘ my beloved, my good and kind, my only friend, I feel very, very ill. I wished to recover, though life is not so valuable to me as it has been. I forbore from telling you how ill I felt. Something makes me feel this is my last illness, — perhaps nearly my last hour. I begged to be left alone with you, to place in your hands what must fall into no other’s. Take my keys : in that escrutoire you will find a parcel addressed to you ; you cannot mistake it, — it is sealed with black : it contains my will. In that you will find evidence of my gratitude — of my dear affection. But it is not of that I wish to speak : you will also find a letter ; if I recover, restore it to me unopened ; if I die, read it for my sake, — and Oh,’ added she, in a broken voice, ‘ if the last wish of a poor creature, dying in her youth, and who at this solemn moment, in raising her heart to Heaven,

hopes the offering is not the less pure because it is full of love for you, — if I can have any influence over the acts of your future life, — oh, think of me — think of the affection I bore you, such as a woman only *can* bear, and obey me — I mean, grant my prayer!’ At this moment, in bustled The Lioness to announce that two full minutes had elapsed, and that Miss Mary must be left to try and compose herself. ‘Remember,’ said the poor girl, faintly; ‘beloved, remember!’ She pressed his hand to her parched lips, then to her withered bosom; then gently dropped it, and her eye followed him to the door. So did the whole person of The Lioness, — and beyond the door, to the stair head, with a far different prayer, — namely, that, after the scene of a sick-room, which must have affected him a little, he would take a quiet walk, and amuse himself among his improvements for an hour or two: ‘Besides, God knows how it will end, and the house ought to be kept quiet.’

“ Mr. A. was of very penetrable stuff. We will not pursue him in his melancholy walk ; we cannot enter into his melancholy heart. He had gone a very little way before he turned back, half resolving again to seek Mary’s room : for he felt he had something to say to her, which, in the hurry of his spirits, he had neglected ; perhaps something he wished to ask pardon for ; perhaps something he ought to promise. He was irresolute. Again he turned his steps to the fields, again he returned to the house. Within much less than his hour or two, he was again under Mary’s window.

Alas ! alas ! happy is he who has never known what it was to look up to a window that he loved for any signals but those of joy or promise, — whose heart has never sunk within him when the casement half-opened, and the shutter half-closed, have told too clearly that all which had been watched in sickness, that all which affection had guarded lest the breath of heaven should visit it too roughly, that the last spark

which fondness had cherished even after hope had ceased, was now extinguished, and that nothing remained within but coldness and silence!

Mr. A. entered his hall. His servants shunned him. One or two were weeping. It was not till he had reached the stair which led to Mary's room, that he met a human form which was disposed to address him. It was The Lioness, who, with her hands folded decently upon the handkerchief which lay across her bosom, and shaking her head mournfully, accosted him in a whisper;—unheard. He asked no question; but turned back, disconsolate, to the fields again.

“ Days passed away. At length, it was announced to the family, and to the neighbours, that poor Mary's will had been opened; and, indeed, it contained evidence of an affection strong in death. Mr. A. was appointed sole heir to all her fortune. Were there any conditions? No. But there was a letter which accompanied the will, and which, some persons

professed to believe, contained some strong and urgent request. Both documents were confided to the sure custody of Mrs. Grace. The will was in due time proved; but the letter was never seen again. Months passed away. At length, it was announced that The Lioness's cares had met their reward; and the day was fixed for Mr. A.'s marriage with his former cook and housekeeper.

“Cheerless, indeed, was that wedding-day! Few attended the ceremony: none came to wish joy, and none seemed to feel it. Unlike a pair proud of themselves and of each other, the bride and bridegroom passed on in silence, in gloom, and, as it were, in secrecy. They entered the church, not by the wide south porch to which the broad path led, but along a narrow track, and through the small western belfry-door. And why did they so? The Lioness was not without ostentation:—and what she would greatly that she would publickly. It was not humility that led her along the by-

way to her marriage: — her dress, her gait, bespoke the reverse. And Mr. A. — the fair gravel walk, between rows of goodly trees, had long been a favourite with him: he had sauntered along it many a happy time; his favourite yew-tree hung its branches near the principal entrance; and that should now have been still more endeared to him; — for, under its shade, and close to the walk, stood the newly raised tomb of poor Mary. But even this circumstance seemed not now to invite him; — he shunned the direct way, thronged with so many recollections of tenderness, and took the more circuitous one.

“Inauspicious as was the wedding-day, the first few months that succeeded were not of brighter promise. Condescension is a very ordinary quality, and one in daily use; for a good reason — it betokens a sense of superiority. But rare and difficult to command in a neighbourhood is the feeling which admits what has lately been a squire’s cook and housekeeper to

the frank enjoyment of equality with squires' wives, who have become so *par droit de naissance*, as well as *par droit de conquête*. Perhaps other feelings conspired to render difficult the access of The Lioness to society. But, be that as it may, few were the visitors at the Hall. So keen was Mr. A.'s sense of this neglect, that it was not long before he proposed a tour abroad. But she had treasured up the fond design of making what had been for years the scene of her obscurity now that of her open triumph. She demanded distinction at home; and was of opinion that, among the assistances towards procuring it, wealth is not unimportant. She thought, too, that the faculty of giving feasts was sometimes found commendable in general society. At once, then, to cast a veil of splendour over some particulars in her former history which she fancied that society resented, and, amidst the blaze of profusion, to steal a footing in the new world, on which, like Columbus, she was now entering,—she re-

solved on a fête, such as the country round Balcoffery had never before seen, and could but imperfectly conceive.

“ The hall was new-furnished for the occasion. Bed-rooms were subdivided, new ones arranged, and the neighbouring village laid under contribution for the accommodation of the guests who should be invited from a distance to the masquerade; for such, for the sake of greater novelty and splendour, it was determined that the entertainment should be. Great were the preparations, and manifold the cares, and indefatigable the exertions, of The Lioness. ‘ *On revient toujours à ses premières confitures.*’ She stooped from her new degree to embrue her well-skilled hands in all that pastry, and in all those sweets, for the confection of which, in her former state of existence, she had obtained so much praise. Her hand was every where, and her eye over every thing. At length the proud night and hour arrived. New

lustres blazed, new curtains waved, new mirrors gleamed, from every nook of every room and gallery. From The Lioness's own dressing-room, at the one end of the suite of apartments, to a small gaily furnished little boudoir at the other, which had not for many months before been opened, all — all was one broad glittering vista of light, along which musick spoke, in many tones, from several bands. The company began to arrive, and to each the host gave his welcome; and the hostess, all plume and spangle, bobbed her awkward bob, smiled her conceited smile, and spoke her vulgar speech. But carefully arranged were the invitations, and carefully guarded the admissions, by tickets, signed and sealed by The Lioness herself, lest any exceptionable, uninvited visitor should intrude. Then all was jingle, gabble, shout, squeak, and rumbustious dulness. Mr. Punch 'did his spiriting' any thing but 'gently,' Harlequin was clumsy and cramped; and the sultana, whose masked charms had failed

to attract the handkerchief of any sultan, was enforced by the heat to make great display of her own. The Nun looked the part admirably, under the arm of her wedded squire, the Turk. The Ballad-Girl in vain struggled to obtain a hearing for 'Give me some food for my mother, in charity,' and, at the same time, to keep an eye upon her own three daughters' proceedings with an Italian Banditti; and Sir Hercules Lumberly came to open shame in the attempt to be 'a Butterfly kissing all buds.' Then commenced the general work of detection. All left their own character to take care of itself, in the endeavour to ascertain each other's identity; till, by about midnight, all began to tire, to suffocate, to unmask, and to crave for food. All, but one, who had not been before perceived. It was a spare and rather tall figure of a woman, to appearance a young woman, dressed in a long greyish robe, which allowed but little of her form to be distinguished. A very large and thick white veil, folded

under the chin, effectually concealed the features. She bent forward, as she stood in the recess of a window, yet with her head half averted, as if desirous to avoid all chance of being known or accosted; nor did any thing seem to lead to the moment of her unmasking, or rather unveiling, herself. At length, a suspicion was communicated to the hostess, that a person was there who might have found her way in without a ticket. This mystery it instantly became the Lioness's place to solve. With this intent, she advanced, and, with much dignity of manner, begged that the lady in grey would be kind enough to unmask before supper, to which, indeed, the greater part of the guests had already retired into the great hall below. The stranger raised her head, as if to gaze intently at The Lioness through her veil. 'If you have an objection to unmask, Madam, perhaps you would be so kind as, in a whisper, to favour me with your name; I am sure that you will perceive it

is very desirable that ——' The lady in grey turned to the window, which, on account of the heat, stood open, and through which the fair full moon was seen brightly shining. She inclined her head to The Lioness, who now stood beside her, and cautiously raised a corner of her veil. — The Lioness stepped back, uttering a short smothered sound. — It was not an exclamation of surprise alone, it was not one of anger. It was rather of the nature of a shuddering hickup, such as that with which the breath retires back through the throat to the chest, from the sudden contact of very cold water. It was plain she had seen what she disliked. For an instant, her breath returned not. When it did, a deep mulberry colour rushed at once all over her face and neck, such as is seldom seen upon a human skin: and, not stooping to recover her fan, which, in the first moment, had dropped from her open hands, she hastened to an opposite corner of the room, where Mr. A. stood in a circle of his friends.

‘ I must appeal to you, Mr. A.:—you must help—protect me,’—croaked she in the ear of her husband. It was a sound intended for a whisper; but extreme agitation had raised her voice and broken it into tones scarcely articulate, but audible to all who stood around :—‘ We are insulted,—a trick has been played on us:—You must, Sir, make *her* retire,’—stammered she in addition, pointing to the figure in grey, which had now assumed a very stately port,—its face turned towards the party, apparently gazing on them, but its veil again closed, in the folds of which the hands were crossed upon the breast. The hostess sank into a chair, and burst into a passionate flood of tears ; while Mr. A., unknowing what had happened, approached the figure, to which his wife had pointed, and which now advanced to meet him. At the first word uttered by Mr. A., the stranger motioned with her head to follow, while she led the way through the suite of rooms. She paused not till she reached

the little boudoir at the further end. In a chair at a table, in the centre, she had taken her seat before Mr. A. had reached it with two or three of the company who had followed to see the end of what appeared to promise a strange adventure; and she fronted them as they entered. There was something in the whole appearance of the figure, its gait, and posture, which, from particular circumstances, was calculated to inspire awe;—for it reminded them strangely of one they had all known; but, alas! they all knew it could not be she;—for between her and the living the tomb had closed. The room in which they now were had been poor Mary's boudoir. Her books, her boxes, the ornaments which she had placed there with her own hands, stood around them, and, as the veiled figure took its seat, a canary bird, which had been a favourite of poor Mary's, and was now her last living memorial, and whose head had for hours rested beneath its pinion, fluttered eagerly about its cage, thrusting its neck here


and there through the bars, and twittering with an eagerness which, probably, in all birds has a meaning which it is not the bird's fault if man does not comprehend. By this time a singular expression was on the faces of Mr. A. and of those who had accompanied him. Each seemed to have received an impression which none communicated to the rest. One or two tried to laugh, but failed. 'Madam,' said Mr. A., but in a tone of voice which no one would have known for his, 'Madam, — I must be — permitted — to ask — what can be the meaning of all this? — I ——' The figure now raised from beneath its veil a hand on which a white glove just marked it from the grey drapery which descended far below the wrist, and, with a single gesture which could not be misunderstood, motioned to those who had entered with Mr. A., and who now stood behind him, to retire. 'No,' said Mr. A., 'no, for Heaven's sake, no: — better not — well — yes — if it must be — leave us alone togeth.....'

His voice failed, and he swallowed the remainder of a request which he feared to complete. As his companions left the room, the door was closed behind them with some violence, and the next object that presented itself to them was The Lioness, on her way to her bed-chamber, borne by four ladies, and shrieking in strong hysterics.

"The masquerade at Balcoffery came to an end; and the company separated more abruptly, and by an hour or two earlier, than had been expected. Two maid-servants remained, by particular desire, by the bedside of The Lioness till daylight, when Mr. A. entered the room in silence. Of the stranger in grey nothing more was known, nor was it ever discovered who she was. It was clearly some one who was anxious not to be recognised, after the disturbance she had created.


"I now approach the end of my story. After the adventure of that strange night, The Lioness, who had before been resolute against

the project of going abroad, was altogether as eager in favour of it. It was not in consequence of any marked change in the conduct of the neighbourhood round Balcoffery towards her; for disliked and shunned she had been before that memorable masquerade, and disliked and shunned she was after. What was the cause of the repugnance she now felt to her residence at the Hall, or of her strong wish to leave it, I will not presume to determine; but Mr. A., who, before, had seldom opposed any strong wish of The Lioness, was now decided, immovable, in his attachment to the place, and in his determination never again, even for a night, to quit it. His attachment to it became of a very gloomy and morbid sort. Something had manifestly occurred, which had seriously affected his health and habits; and, gradually, his mind was perceived to be sinking, — not into confirmed melancholy, for sometimes he would wander over the saddest subjects with a degree of levity, and almost gaiety, which was distress-



sing to his friends, and (to judge from appearances) alarming to Mrs. A. Thenceforward, her attentions were exemplary. She seldom left him; never when any other persons were by; for she would then place herself by his side, with an assiduity beyond that of the most careful nurse. She would watch every word as it fell from his lips, almost every thought as it rose in his mind. After the second year of his marriage, he fell into a state of almost entire idiotcy; and, 'Poor creature!' his indefatigable wife would say, 'I see no end to it: his health does not break; and idiots always live on long after a release would be happiness to themselves and to those who love them.' The singular occurrence at the masquerade was his favourite theme. He would speak of that night sometimes with great terror, sometimes with tears, but most frequently in a vacant and garrulous tone, which, considering the disorder that, at the time, it had produced in the family, and the conversations it had afterwards given rise to in

the neighbourhood, was very unpleasant, and showed his wits to be thoroughly deranged. On these occasions, Mrs. A. would sometimes be obliged to interpose with strong means of coercion, and to check his disposition to chatter upon improper subjects, by sending him suddenly out of the room where the company was assembled, in custody of a servant. But there was one habit growing rapidly upon him, which was most pitiable to witness. Often would he steal away from the society of a few friends who occasionally came to cheer the disconsolation of the Hall; and he might then be seen crawling dejectedly along the spacious suite of rooms, till he came to the door of what once was Mary's boudoir. Then, forgetful and unconscious that, by positive order, that door had remained constantly closed since the night when he and the unknown mask were there alone, he would always, on finding it fastened, sit down on the floor, and weep bitterly, and utter such things as, when he was found so



occupied, were sure to occasion him a severe remonstrance, and a considerable abridgment of liberty for some days after.

“ One evening, several of Mr. A.’s early friends, who had passed the day and dined by invitation at the Hall, were assembled in the drawing-room. It was a gloomy autumnal twilight, and the rain was pattering heavily against the windows. Mr. A. had separated himself from the company on their leaving the dining-room. More, considerably more, than an hour had elapsed, and preparations were already making for tea; and still Mr. A. returned not. The Lioness began to be alarmed. Surely he could not, in such an evening, have strolled out of doors! No, he had not. At length, he entered the room, his manner quite the reverse of dejected; but, still, it was the gaiety of a mind that was unconscious why the features smiled. ‘ Nobody knows where I have been;’ at length said he, after a long silence, during which he sat smiling and waving

his chair to and fro. — ‘No, and nobody cares, my love,’ hastily interrupted his wife. ‘Your tea waits : come, never mind what you have been doing : I dare say that Mr. —— will have the kindness, (when the candles come, and by the time you have finished that cup of tea,) to read the newspaper to you.’ — ‘Nay,’ continued Mr. A., firm to his purpose, and rejecting every attempt to muzzle his story with tea, or to supersede it with the newspaper, — ‘Nay, you shall hear. I’ve been walking up and down the long gallery all this time ; and you won’t guess who has been with me. Poor Mary ! — Very pale, poor thing ! Nay, you need not bounce up, and try to stop me, as if you didn’t believe my story. I left her there. — There she is still, walking up and down. If you wish to see her, you will find her there. It is she, I assure you. Nay, you’ll know her ; — for she smells of the poison !’ —

“What remains is to be told in a few words. The family left Balcoffery next morning for

Bath ; — a very long journey, from which they never returned. Mr. A., in the course of a few months, took a longer ; but did not return home, even to rest under his yew-tree. He lies buried in the abbey church, and The Lioness lives, a prosperous gentlewoman, at No. —, in — Crescent, upon the revenues of the Balcoffery estates, and of poor Mary's fortune, which she inherits in totality from her defunct husband, under a will executed just before their marriage. But on Balcoffery she has never since set eyes ; and it is doubtful whether she ever will. And so ends the story of THE MAN AND THE LIONESS."

G.

A PROPOS OF BREAD.

“ Dans cet antre
Je vois fort bien comme l'on entre,
Mais je ne vois pas comme on en sort.”

La Fontaine.

YOUR à propos is a most faithless figure of speech. What is he but an insinuating rogue of a Frenchman, who, give him an inch, will take an ell? slides himself into company where he is not the least expected, obtaining his welcome by never appearing to doubt it; and then leads forward the confiding ear, under false pretences, heaven knows whither, until, too late, we find the word of promise broken both to it and to the hope.

Not long ago, the following story was told me, à propos of a remark I happened, without calculating consequences, to make on Bread.

“What deleterious stuff they *do* put into their white bread,” said I to a fresh-looking, elderly man, with whom I had left London in the eight-o’clock Gloucester night coach: for it was not easy to hit upon any other subject in common between us, who were total strangers to each other, but Bread, which is common to all who have it to eat. Not a word had passed since we started from Hatchett’s, and we had now cleared the stones of Hammersmith. “I do wish the parliament men would do something to stop the bakers,” quoth I, scholarly and wisely; “it’s my belief that oyster-shells and dead men’s bones are the wholesomest ingredients in it.”

“Sir,” said my new acquaintance, putting into the side-pocket of the coach the fur cap, in which, despairing of a topick, he had disposed himself for sleep; “sir,” said he, sitting bolt upright, and addressing himself to me for serious discourse, “the bakers have other ingredients; and, if you are as little inclined to

sleep as I am, sir, I will tell you, à propos of that, what happened to me several years ago. It is an awful story; it sounds like a ghost story; but I have been brought up better than to believe in ghosts. I am not superstitious, sir, and am a serious member of the church of England; but some things *do* happen to people in the course of their lives, which it is very difficult to account for.

“ I travel for the wholesale house of M. and Co., in the city. My name is Stephen Tudway. Towards the end of March, 1814, I had some patterns of articles in the cotton line, to take orders upon from some respectable retail dealers at Derby. My business detained me in that town full four hours later than I had intended; for I had a longish journey to make that day, and several small retail houses to call at in my way to Matlock. Make what haste I could, the night had set in gloomy and wet, before I came upon the wild country that borders on that town. I had but lately under-

taken to do business on that road, and was quite unacquainted with that part of England. It was so dark, and the country so wild, and I so much fatigued, that I was very well contented to put up for the night at the Peacock Inn, on the edge of Matlock Heath. I must say the accommodations were all that a man need wish. The people were civil, the refreshments good of their kind, and there was nothing remarkable in the appearance of any one, excepting a young woman at the bar, who had a cast in her eye that was unpleasant. With that I went to bed. The window of my chamber gave upon the inn-yard, which opened on one side to the heath. I closed the shutters and drew the curtains myself. Well, I lay sleepless for many hours, listening to the storm, which abated gradually; and I was in great hopes it was near morning, as I fancied I could hear the small birds twittering at my window. But still no light appeared, and all was so remarkably silent, that (I being accustomed to

sleep in towns) some dread came over me. Leastwise, I felt disagreeable like. I quite longed to hear the cock crow. I began to draw my breath with difficulty, by reason of a strange feeling of weight on my chest. Suddenly I thought I heard a shriek. It was repeated, and seemed to approach from the heath till it was right under my window, and very piercing; and I thought I could catch the words, 'For God's sake, help!'

"Now, sir, I am a man who never cares to push myself forward into other people's concerns; and I guessed that the folks of the inn would be about in an hour or two at most, and might help the poor body. So I lay quiet, not knowing whether it was day or night; but I soon found that it was still night. Being in the habit of travelling with property, I had, as usual, fastened the door by double locking it. The key was — begging your pardon — in the pocket of my smalls; and my smalls were — saving your presence — under my pillow. Notwithstanding all these precautions, the door

was thrown open with violence; and, by the light of the lamp on the stair-head, I saw a tall figure of a woman, with an article of white cotton drapery, rush to my bed's head. 'For God's sake, help!' again it cried. I asked a few hurried questions, and felt much distressed; but the only answer I could obtain from her was, that I could save her life,—perhaps more; for that she meditated a crime which I might prevent. 'For God's sake, help!' again she cried; 'I am on the point of committing suicide. I left my father's house on purpose to throw myself from the rock where *he*, the deceiver, last met me. But Heaven is kind. An impulse, which I could not resist, led me off my path to this inn. Something told me that I should here find one who has the power to help and save me. Follow me directly. I am distracted. Be witness to my crime,—or prevent it!' So saying, the poor creature burst into a flood of tears, and rushed out of the door; and I could hear her hurrying down the

stairs. What could I do, sir, but follow her? I had luckily my horseman's cloak within reach, which I threw round me; and it is my habit to sleep in my worsted stockings. I like to be particular. As I followed her out of the door of the house, the moon was shining bright and clear. I tracked her by her white cotton drapery; and, (during the intervals when I could not see her,) by the sound of her voice, which still cried, 'For God's sake, help!'

The scenery around the inn, which I now for the first time saw clearly by the light of the moon, was wild and terrifick: rocks and tangled brakes, and, here and there, a birch or an alder shooting up against the bright sky. The road which I had travelled the night before was left far to our right. After, as near as I can guess, three quarters of an hour's rapid pursuit, (during which my feelings of wonder and fear were so strong, I could neither call nor speak to her, I could only follow,) we came to the foot of a tall rock, not very unlike

some of those which I had passed on the skirts of Dove-dale the day before. To this rock she clung, and began to climb the side of it which was the least abrupt, till she reached the top. ‘For God’s sake, help!’ again she cried; ‘this is the spot where last *he* left me! I am going over — *you* may save me. Make haste! make haste! For God’s sake, help!’

“Now, sir, from my earliest youth I have had a strange dislike of clambering heights. I never was bred to it, nor made it a practice. I do not know whether it is peculiar to me, — I dare say it is, — but I feel in those situations a sort of sickness and dizziness-like come over me, and I lose all power of my limbs; and I never felt this peculiarity so strongly as on this occasion. I thought it would be a great risk; and I am a family man, and I was alone with the young woman, and nobody to help me. Yet I wished to save her, and was just turning in my own mind what to do, when the poor soul flung herself off the rock, on the contrary side

to that on which I was standing. I just saw the white flare of her gown, streaming in the wind and the moonlight as she fell ; and, in a moment after, I heard a heavy sound, as if her head had come first to the ground, and was crushed by the fall ; a low moaning followed. But fancy, sir, my terror, when I certainly heard these words, muttered indistinctly, but in a tone of voice I shall never forget : — ‘ Mr. Tudway, I know you ; you might have saved me ; I am gone — gone — gone ! but we shall meet again. This night twelvemonth such a cloud as is now sailing towards the moon will be in the sky, and you then *must* meet me at the foot of this rock ; — remember — remember ! ’ At this moment the cloud passed over the moon ; it was quite dark, and I cannot tell how I got back. I had seen the young woman’s end, and it had so bewildered me ! I had witnessed suicide !

“ The next year seemed to pass strangely. I was with my family, and I plied my business as usual ; but I never could banish this strange

occurrence from my mind for a single moment; and never could I assume the courage to impart it even to Mrs. Tudway, before whom I had never had a secret in my life. But I remember the newspapers were full of the tale of the young woman, and I lived in fear; for I thought I should be taken up as having consented to what my nature recoiled from. Time, which I wished to lag, seemed to fly rapidly; for I knew that next spring would take me again to a part of the country which I now so much wished to avoid.

“The March following, as I expected, I was again obliged to travel into Derbyshire with patterns. These journeys are regular in our business. On the 31st of March following, I was again at Derby. Again I was detained, and till a later hour than the year before. I was thoroughly benighted on the edge of Matlock Heath. I searched in vain for the Peacock Inn; and lost myself among the wilds. The moon shone brightly, but the

way was so rough that I was fain to dismount from my horse, who was sinking under me with fatigue. I led him with great trouble among the brakes and stones, until, pursuing a sheep-path up a bank, I found myself stopped at the top by a precipice. It all at once occurred to me that this was the very rock from which, the year before, on exactly such a night, the unhappy young woman had flung herself. Her last words suddenly came across me. I cannot tell how it was, sir; but I felt as if I had been brought there again by Providence to meet her, as she had promised me I *must* do. I lay down amid the brush-wood in utter despair, and looked over into the hollow; and, although I am far from being superstitious, I really did expect to see something.

“A winding path led to a little glade, surrounded by stones, at the foot of the rock, which might be about one hundred yards from the place where I lay. Judge, sir, of my feelings, when I plainly saw the figure of a woman

in white, come slowly along the path into the glade. It seemed to walk with difficulty, and as if in pain; and it kept its hands to its head, round which an article of handkerchief, such as the country women wear, was closely folded.

“ It stopped in the middle of the glade and looked round, as if expecting to find some one; and I thought it uttered a sound of disappointment. My blood curdled within me. I felt that no wealth would tempt me to present myself before her, for I more than believed it was the same figure that had thrown itself from the rock. If I stirred among the brushwood to make my escape, she would surely have seen me, and, I warrant, done me a mischief. I could only lie still, gasping with fear, listening to my own heart beating, (as the song has it, ‘ the bounding hart amid the rocks, ’) and gazing steadfastly upon her as she paced to and fro; and I felt myself thoroughly powerless.

“ At length the figure dropped its hands

from its head, and I could see marks of blood and clay upon the handkerchief that bound her forehead. With another expression of discontent, the figure left the glade, by the same path by which she had entered it.

“ I cannot express how much I was relieved at being rid of the sight of this phantom ; — for now I really believed it such. It was angered at not finding me where it had made the strange appointment to meet me. I lay, however, shuddering, and afraid to move, lest it should have only retired to some ambush, from whence, the moment I stirred, it might cross me.

“ The moon had risen high behind my back as I lay looking steadfastly on the glade upon which it shone. Gradually the light was dimmed, as if a cloud was passing across. I turned my head to look round and see what was the matter with the moon, — when, sir, — gracious heavens ! — there stood the figure, erect, the eyes bent down upon me, — and it shadowed



me. The precipice was before me; — what I feared worse was behind me. I started on my feet; — and I felt myself on the edge of the rock and falling. Sir, a despairing man will cling to any thing; I caught by the white drapery of the ghastly figure itself. In *my* turn I cried, ‘For God’s sake, help!’ but the figure, which was stately as a corpse, laughed as we fell together!

“A power of curious things may happen in a man’s life-time. I had fallen out of bed on the floor of my chamber, at the Peacock Inn, on Matlock Heath, (though, thank God, not much hurt,) and the clean white striped Manchester head-curtain of the bed was in my hand; and the cock was crowing under my window, like a Christian calling for help. In riding from the inn I was astonished to find that it stands in a remarkably flat country, for two or three miles round; so that where could I have been for the precipice of the night before? Time, too, sir, had stood still: I had come to that inn on

the night of the 31st of March, 1814. It was now but the 1st of April of the same year; my bill mentioned but ‘one night’s lodging;’ and, on my return home, I found Mrs. T. still in the family way, as I had left her.

“ I have sometimes thought, that it might be all a dream; — but then, again, I cannot justly recollect going to sleep. Besides, I am no great dreamer at any time, and my supper that night had been nothing particular. If you will believe me, sir, it was but one blood-pudding, a trifle of pickled salmon, some of their mild Derbyshire cheese, toasted, (which I relished exceedingly,) and not one drop did I drink that whole night, but one jug of egg flip!

“ But, sir, now I come to what we were talking of; à propos of bread. If it *was* a dream, it must have been all owing to the bread, in which, I am told, the Derbyshire bakers put a power of pounded Derbyshire spar. — But, sir, you seem sleepy —.”

G.

LA BELLE CHANOINESSE.

THE picturesque town of Pau, the capital of the department of the Lower Pyrennees, is well known to almost all who have visited the South of France. For such as can feel the charm of romantick scenery it has all that can attract and please. One of the loveliest valleys, over which that bright climate, with its golden sun and canopy of clear blue sky, sheds its glorious influence, lies spread in vast extent before the eminence on which the town stands proudly. The Gave flows wandering for many a league in its sight, the waters dividing themselves into many a sparkling rivulet; and, behind it, the wild majestick Pyrennees rear their tops to heaven. To such as can take delight in the associations which bring back the memory of


famous acts and famous men, its old castle, long the residence of the princes of Bearne, is consecrated as sometime the sojourn of Bayard, and the birth place of Henry the Fourth. But it is not for the lover of romantick scenery alone, nor is it only for the historian or antiquary, that the town of Pau finds subjects of interest. Its church contains a short and simple record of a story of more modern date, of persons whose names will not be found in the pages of a nation's history, but whose sad and strange fate forms the subject of the following tale : —

In the pavement, near the centre of its main aisle, is a small black marble slab, inscribed with these words, “ Ci-gît le malheureux Sieur Hypolite de la Haye, qui périt dans sa jeunesse, l'année 1786.” And who, thought I, can be truly said to be unhappy, whose life was so innocent that there was no need to load his epitaph with eulogy, and who died young? “ Oh yes ; he was unhappy, poor youth ! ”

said the old concierge, in answer to what I had not expressed in words. What follows is the substance of the story, as nearly as I can now remember it, which, at my desire, he related. Its interest was scarcely diminished by the provincial Patois in which he told it, and, in parts, it was marked by all the eloquence of strong and tender feeling. —

“ Nearly half a century has gone by since his dreadful death. Yet all the circumstances of that sad event are fresh in my recollection ; sad to all this part of his native province, in which his name was loved, and his fine qualities admired ; sad, indeed, and mournful to those who knew him, and to whom those fine and good qualities had made him dear. It happened at the time when this ancient church was shaken to its foundations, and when that part of it which is now replaced by the modern structure to the east fell in the great earthquake which made that year fatally memorable in the history of our town. It was in a

fine summer evening, like this, and at this very hour, when the last rays of the setting sun were darting red through the stained glass which then adorned that western window, that, bowed with sickness and sorrow, La Haye was seen resting on his brother's shoulder, as they stood together, by the tomb of La Belle Chanoinesse. There was then, not far from the high altar, a table monument, on which lay the stone figure of a woman. It was said to be of Italian workmanship, and of about the nineteenth century. The face had traces of great beauty. Its expression gave token of melancholy sweetness and resignation, according well with the history which tradition had handed down concerning the belle chanoinesse whose bones rested beneath her monument. It was said that, in early youth, she had renounced the world, and had devoted herself to God. She was young when she died. The countenance of the statue gave token of a calm and peaceful and happy repose, but a



repose too perfect, too deep, for sleep. The lips and nostrils seemed too fixed to represent aught that had the breath of life; the eyes were closed, not lightly, as if again to wake to light and motion; and yet the features bore none of the grim and terrible traces of death. The hands, in witness of her piety, were joined in prayer.

It was by this tomb that the brothers stood. The younger, Hypolite, had lately suffered, in all its weight and bitterness, that blow, which, happily for man, Providence hath so formed the human heart that it can suffer but once—the loss of an early and first love. Between himself and Aline de Thierron an attachment had subsisted almost from their childhood. Equal in rank, and matched in every quality of person, mind, and feeling, which could make every link of it indissoluble and imperishable, they had cherished it as those only can between whom it has been formed when the world has yet been known to them only by its fair promises, and when its passions are only in

their pure, single-hearted, and innocent ardour. The day had been fixed for their marriage. The whole neighbourhood looked forward to this event, as to a joyful festival of good wishes towards those whose bright dawn of life had been hailed by all. For all had marked their young love in its tender infancy and steady growth with deep and anxious interest.

But one week more was to elapse before that day which was to crown their hopes and happiness, when the door of Aline's parent was one morning opened to Hypolite by a servant, who gave him a letter in that hand-writing which, till then, had never spoken to him but of joy and constancy. It bade him, under her own well-known signature, a cold, abrupt, and eternal farewell ! The motives of this sudden change of heart and purpose were lightly stated, and attributed only to a sudden discovery that, till then, she had been ignorant of the true state of her affections.

The wretched young man retired, in utter

disconsolation, to his couch, from which, for many weeks, he rose not again. Life had become a dreary wilderness, a waste before him, where no resting-place for hope remained. The smiling vision of years had passed away. Truth had fled from that sanctuary to which he had trusted all. Truth, even woman's truth, was what he could never seek for elsewhere, nor believe in, more. A violent fever had ensued, from which the buoyancy of youth, which restores health, even where the heart is broken, enabled him slowly to recover. But his peace of mind was gone — never, as it appeared, to return.

His brother had watched by his side with affectionate care, and, on the evening in question, had led him forth into the balmy air of that calm sunset. They were both at an age when the elastick mind springs up, unconsciously to itself, against the pressure of continued grief. Whenever, at intervals, their conversation strayed from that interesting to-


pick, it fell on recollections of joyous days. For, till then, misfortune had never visited them. And who can exclude hope from a mind at under twenty? But yet, even in lending itself to the natural advance of the animal spirits, such a mind is jealous of its grief, and so blends its own melancholy in with the consolations it seeks, that it is doubtful, whether there be not in them more of sadness than of joy.

The brothers directed their steps to the church. The chant of vespers had died away upon the ear as they climbed the last ascent of the steep narrow street which led to the western entrance. Congregation, priests, catechists, were flocking out; and soon only a few old persons were left, absorbed in private whispered prayer. But, one after the other, even these rose from the pavement, and left the brothers alone, as has been described. As they bent together over the tomb of the Belle Chanoinesse, "Yes," said Hypolite, "your's

was a happy life, a constant love ; you cast your youth, your faith, at the feet of Him who alone was worthy to claim or to reward such service. There was a time when, fondly, foolishly, I thought the treasure of a woman's love might last, although bestowed upon a thing of earth. It is a bitter hour when man first learns that to heaven alone can such a vow be surely kept, and never can be proved till the true heart has become cold beneath its monument." He drew his hand from his bosom, and, with it, a gold ring, which had hung by a black riband round his neck ; and " oh," he sobbed, " in joyousness and sorrow, in health and sickness, this has ever sat upon a faithful breast. To none, I have sworn it, to none of earth, since *she* was false, shall this, my marriage ring, once vowed to her, be ever given. But you, Belle Chanoinesse, devoted to a love that failed not, even to this your honoured grave, your faith endured, unchanged, and incorruptible, to your memory I give my

widowed and withered heart, and none shall henceforth ever wear this ring but you, worthy of a true pledge, one destined for far other and happier nuptials; — you, my bride, my holy, pure, and constant bride!” His brother knew too well the duties of kindness to thwart the waywardness of feelings such as his. Hypolite laid the ring upon the upraised marble hands. It fell into the narrow cavity between them. He knelt to hallow the offering with prayer. After a moment he rose, and the two left the church together in silence.

Early in the following morning, the poor youth's chamber was, as usual, visited by the faithful companion of his grief. The bed was unoccupied. His sleepless head had never pressed that pillow during the night. In vain was he searched for through the house. To the church his brother repaired at last, with the notion that again haply he might have strayed there to indulge his melancholy near the Chanoinesse's tomb. At that tomb indeed he was; — stretched




by the side of the statue, he had lain all night, his cheek resting on the cold bosom, scarce colder than the cheek that pressed it, and the raised hands clasped between his own. With difficulty was he persuaded to leave the church. Night after night, whenever he could escape his brother's watchful eye, did Hypolite visit the monument; and ever, in the morning, was he found reclining on its top. His sickly mind was sinking fast into tranquil and confirmed sadness. His lip, his cheek, were still faded and pale; his eye sunk, his frame enfeebled. Yet gradually he reached a state of convalescence which enabled his brother to propose to him a journey over the Spanish frontier, to reap those benefits which change of air and scene are sometimes sanguinely expected to minister to a mind diseased.

For two years he remained abroad; his health weak and frail; but the principle of life still unsubdued. At the end of this time the wicked and detestable fraud on which his

happiness had made wreck was all laid bare to him.

To those men who form their notion of the motives and actions of others upon the mere suggestions of their own honourable hearts, it would be difficult to believe in some of those causes of conduct which the observation and practice of the world too sadly prove are amongst the most ordinary. That the ambitious solicitude of parents for what is called the advancement of their children's welfare should busy itself to thwart those affections which bear the warranty of warm and guileless innocence, has become an incident, stale in fiction, because so frequent in real life that in the details there is little variety, and, alas! lead also but to one unvarying end — to loveless, cheerless, hopeless misery. It is enough to say that the detestable fraud had but too well succeeded. The ruin had been made complete. Aline had received, under the forged signature of her lover, a letter which cancelled every vow, which owned another and a more recent



passion, and which prayed the amazed and deluded girl, for the sake of her own happiness, not to bind him by a forepast pledge, which he yet would keep, if she should desire it, but with which his once devoted love no longer could abide, in its single and changeless faith.

Aline's answer was her own. It was that of a broken heart; but of the proud and indignant spirit of one who yet could feel her station and her duty. She could not suspect a fraud so dark, so cruel; least of all could she suspect it from the hand of her own mother. And it was not till after that unhappy and guilty parent's death, that, from the rough draft of that fatal letter, the dark and cruel story was revealed. To Aline, even then, the story remained in part a mystery; for she still closed her mind against the evidence of her mother's crime. She only accepted, and eagerly accepted, the joyful proof of her lover's innocence, his honour, and his truth. Between two hearts which had been knit together so closely,

so tenderly, and so long, no very detailed explanations were required, or sought for. Hypolite returned, once more, to claim his long lost, his restored bride.

And now, at length, was the happy harvest to be reaped of once blighted hopes, again freshly blooming; and the deep sorrows of years, and the mournful constancy of hearts which, long severed, had never sought another love, were to find reward. Again the approaching union of Hypolite and Aline was hailed as a festival of gladness to all, far and near, of the neighbourhood, who came in from all parts to join their congratulations with prayers, that the lives of the young pair might be long in their great and well earned happiness.


On the eve of the day which was now fixed for their marriage, they walked alone together, till the moon had risen high above their heads. As they were returning to the residence of Aline, Hypolite drew her towards the church, in which, when a few hours more should have



elapsed, those vows were to be exchanged between them which would unite their fates, indissolubly, and for ever.

They entered, and, passing up the main aisle, approached the tomb of the Belle Chanoinesse. The faint beams of the lamp which was suspended before the high altar fell upon the recumbent statue. Hypolite's arm was round the slender waist of his companion. "Aline," said he, "you must admire the calm and melancholy beauty of the Belle Chanoinesse; you must love this monument for my sake. Aline, it was but yesterday you asked me what had soothed my spirits into patience under my affliction. Who had been my friend, my comforter. The midnight silence of this church, that steady constant flame, shedding a glimpse like that of memory over the scene of the past day's busy turmoil,—the deep repose of this beauteous statue, so like that which she sought and found, the peace which this world cannot give, and never can disturb,—all these were

long my comforters. Night after night I have lingered here. This has been my bed, Aline," continued he, placing his spread hand on the cold stone which formed the table for the marble figure: "here have I rested, whenever I could find rest; there was my kind, my constant friend;" (he touched the forehead of the figure with his lips as he spoke,) "here was the patient listener to the story of my woes, the silent monitor, even the bride who welcomed me, when, as I thought, I was abandoned by my living bride, by my Aline! Her hands are joined in prayer: look at them, dear love; they are closed upon the ring with which I had prepared to wed you. Betrayed by you, as I then believed I was, I gave to this cold bride that ring, with many a vow that, since you were false, no living one should ever claim me as her lord. It soothed my wounded heart, my wayward fancy, to lie beside her on this monumental stone; to call it my nuptial couch! You weep, Aline! Nay, dry your tears; I am



wrong to move you thus; and tears enough have already fallen on these cold stones. But we will weep no more; and to-morrow's blessed dawn, Aline, shall begin a life of smiles for both of us."

"Why did you bring me here, dear Hypolite?" said the fair girl; "why did you bring me here? Indeed, indeed, we have had our share of melancholy. My heart sickens at the remembrance of grief; it yearns for happiness; and this scene, with all that it recalls of your past sufferings, gives me a pang which you ought not to inflict. It is, at least, unnecessary now. Hypolite, 'tis strange, but I am jealous of that marble figure. You came to her for comfort, when you thought your Aline false. You came to her, because she could not change. You found here a silent welcome, but it was changeless; and her bosom was to you less cold than that which had so lately cast you away. Oh, Hypolite! if you loved her, how must you have hated me!"

“Sweet Aline,” returned Hypolite, “how can I chide you for such jealousy? Oh no! — it tells me of the warm, true, love that lives for me within your faithful, your wronged, heart. But you also must acknowledge the motive which drew me to this spot — to la Belle Chanoinesse. It was true and ardent love for you that made me forswear all other solace than what this peaceful semblance of death could promise me. And now, let us go home. To-morrow, — Aline, — to-morrow!... Hark!... what noise is that? — Who spoke? — Who laughed?”

With a slight shudder, Aline clung to her lover, and both paused, and listened, again to catch the sound. It was not repeated. “Aline,” said Hypolite, pressing the trembling girl to his bosom, “Aline, we will go. We have been overheard; — and what we have said has appeared fit subject for merriment to some one whose heart is free from care and kindly feeling.”

“It was no laugh,” replied Aline; and she clung yet closer to his breast. “Hypolite, it was no laugh! At least, no merriment was there. ’Tis said, idiots will laugh, when they see others weep. I could fancy such ill-timed mirth, a sound so lacking sense and sympathy, in the wild noise we heard. I tremble still. — Yes; let us hasten hence, dear Hypolite. It is a childish wish of mine; but, would that we were to meet to-morrow in any other church than this! Once already here have our fond hopes been crossed. Oh! may they not again be so deceived!”

And now, the morning came. — The church was crowded with smiling faces, and the bride and bridegroom stood before the altar, to receive the blessing, to which every bosom was eager to respond. It was a sultry September morning, and the gay assembly drew no sad presage from the gathering darkness of the atmosphere, which seemed to portend a stormy day. The distant thunder growled, and sheets

of faint summer lightning flickered at intervals against the purple canopy which gradually deepened along the sky.

The priest was proceeding to pronounce the final benediction, and the hands of the betrothed were already joined together, when a sudden and tremendous shock of an earthquake rocked the whole edifice to its foundations. The words broke off. The congregation were panick-struck — many sunk on the pavement with fear — some rushed to the doors to escape the threatening peril; but few had had time to issue forth, before a second shock came, and then a third, to which the high altar, and that part of the fabrick under which it stood, bowed and sunk with a tremendous crash.

The loud shrieks of hundreds were heard, mingled with the roar of the crumbling edifice; a stifling cloud of dust arose, and for some minutes covered all the building; and, when it cleared away, nearly one-third portion of the

church lay in a mighty and confused mass of ruins.

All those who had been near the altar had, at the first alarm, taken refuge in that part which still stood. As the trembling crowds assembled in the streets, all were found safe and unhurt—all but one. The bridegroom was missing! In vain did his name pass from mouth to mouth.—All search was vain. Vain were the hopes that he might yet be found alive, though wounded, among the lighter upper fragments of the chancel wall. He was seen no more, till several days after, when the workmen, who since that fatal morning had incessantly laboured to effect a passage to where the altar had stood, found the pavement broken into the vaults over part of which the monument of the Belle Chanoinesse had been built, and which now, together with the statue, was in fragments. The body of the poor young man was discovered, uncrushed, and unwounded. It appeared as though he had died from suffocation under one

of the low arches of a stone grave, which had not fallen in. His body was stretched out tranquilly in death, and, near it, lay a small skeleton, which had been buried there, probably, centuries before. A plain gold ring, of modern workmanship, was on its bony hand.

G.

THE END.

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